



IOHANNES SCOTT  
S. T. P.

*Printed for S. Manship at y<sup>e</sup> Ship near y<sup>e</sup> Royal Exchange.*





*R. White sculp.*

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THE  
**Christian Life,**

Wheren is shew'd,

- I. *The Worth and Excellency of the Soul.*
- II. *The Divinity and Incarnation of our Saviour*
- III. *The Authority of the Holy Scripture.*
- IV. *A Dissuasive from Apostacy.*

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VOL. V. and Last.

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By JOHN SCOTT, D. D. late  
Rector of St. Giles's in the Fields.

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The Second Edition.

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L O N D O N:

Printed for S. Manthip and R. Wilkin, and  
are to be Sold by W. Davis at the *Black Bull*  
in Cornhill, and J. Bontwick at the *Hat and*  
*Star* in St. Paul's Church-yard. 1700.

THE

NEW YORK

W. J. BROWN

I. The first part of the book is devoted to a history of the

II. The second part of the book is devoted to a history of the

III. The third part of the book is devoted to a history of the

IV. The fourth part of the book is devoted to a history of the

VOL. I

B. JOHN BROWN

NEW YORK

Printed for the author, at the New York Press, No. 10, Nassau Street, New York.

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To the Honourable

*SUSANNA NOEL,*

(Mother to the Right Honourable  
Baptist Earl of Gainsborough,)

**T**His last Volume of the  
Works of my Dear De-  
ceased Friend, the Reverend  
Dr. Scott, is humbly and grate-  
fully Dedicated, by,

Her Honours,

Most obliged,

and most Devoted Servant,

Humphrey Zouch.



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## PART. IV.

MATTH. XVI. 26.

*What is a Man profited if he shall gain the whole World and lose his own Soul? Or what shall a Man give in Exchange for his Soul?*

**I**N the 24th. Verse our Saviour urges his Disciples to that necessary Duty of *denying themselves*, that is, of surrendering up their Wills to the conduct of his, and renouncing all their *Worldly Interest* when it comes in Competition with their Duty, and of taking up their Cross, and following him; that is, of preparing themselves to endure Persecution for his sake, and to persist courageously in the Profession and Practice of his Religion whatsoever Oppositions they should meet with from the World. And to press them hereunto, he urges this Argument, Ver. 25. *For whosoever will save his Life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his Life, shall find it.* Where the Greek Word *ψυχη* which we render Life, may perhaps be better render'd *Himself*, it being



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familiar both with *Hebrews* and *Syrians* to call a man's Life and Soul *Himself*: so the Psalmist, thou shalt not leave my Soul in Hell, that is, thou shalt not leave me Perishing in my Grave, *Psal.* 16. 10. And *Levit.* 20. 23. Ye shall not make your Souls abominable, i. e. your selves; And that it should be so render'd here is evident, because St. Luke so expounds it, *What is a Man profited, if he gain the whole World and lose himself, or be cast away?* Luke 9. 25, And indeed the Soul being the Principal Part of a Man, and that which advances him into a Species of Being above that of a meer Animal, may very well be called *himself*, according to that of *Hiercles*, τὸ δὲ ἡ ψυχὴ, τὸ δὲ σῶμα αὐτοῦ, τὰ δὲ ἐξῆς τῶ σωματός. Thy Soul is Thee, thy Body, thine, and thy outward Goods thy Bodies. And if instead of Life we render *ψυχὴ* *Himself*, the Words will be very plain and easy; for whosoever will save himself by renouncing me and my Religion, shall lose himself for ever; and whosoever will be content to lose himself for my sake, shall save himself for ever. And this he farther inforces in the Text, *What is a Man profited, if he shall gain the whole World, and lose his own Soul? or what shall a Man give in exchange for his Soul?* that is, what will it avail a Man to gain the whole World, if he for ever ruin himself by it? and when he hath thus ruined himself, what would he give, if it were in his Power, to save and recover himself again? The Words thus explained, I shall resolve the sense of them into these five Propositions.

I. That a Man; or the Soul of a Man is a Thing of inestimable Price and Value; for our Saviour here

here weighs it against the whole World, that is, against all the *Pleasures, Profits, and Honours* that this *inferiour* World can afford; and declares that in the *just* Ballance of his Esteem it out-weighs them all. And certainly that must needs be *exceeding precious*, whose Worth the whole World cannot counter-poise.

II. That this *precious* Soul may be lost. This our *Saviour* plainly supposes in these Words, *if he lose his own Soul.*

III. That our *renouncing* of *Christ* and his *Religion* will most certainly infer this Loss. For these Words, as I have shewed you, our *Saviour* urges as an Argument to dissuade Men from *Apostacy*; but if without *losing* our Souls, we might *renounce* him and *apostatize* from him, there would be no *Force* in all this Argument to dissuade us from it.

IV. That when this Soul is *lost*, 'tis *lost* irrecoverably. *What shall a Man give in exchange for his Soul?* where the *Greek* Word *ἀντάλλαγμα*, which we render *Exchange*, is used in the same sense with *ἱξίασμα*, which signifies a price of Redemption, denoting that if a Man should or could give never so much to buy his Soul from Perdition, yet no *Price* of Redemption will be *taken* for it.

V. That this *irrecoverable* Loss of a Soul is of such a *vast* Moment, that the Gain of the whole World is not *sufficient* to compensate it. *What is a Man profited*, that is, he is not at all *profited*, nay he is so far from *that* that he is a *vast* Loser.

I. That the Soul of a Man is a Thing of an *inestimable* Price and Value. And for the Proof of

this Proposition, I shall endeavour these *two* Things.

*First*, To represent to you of what *vast* Worth it is in Respect of its own *natural* Capacities.

*Secondly*, To shew you of what *vast* Esteem it is in the Judgment of all those who, as we must needs suppose, do best *understand* the Worth of it.

1. I shall endeavour to represent to you of what *vast* Worth it is in Respect of its own *natural* Capacities, particularly in these *four*.  
 (1.) In Respect of its Capacity of *Understanding*.  
 (2.) Of *Moral Perfection*. (3.) Of *Pleasure and Delight*. (4.) Of *Immortality*.

1. The Soul of Man is of *vast* Worth in Respect of its Capacity of *Understanding*. For certainly to *understand*, is the *greatest* and *noblest* Operation that a Being is *capable* of; for it is this that gives Beauty and Excellence to all our *other* Operations whether they be *natural* or *moral*: 'Tis this that proposes the *Ends*, and directs the Course, and Prescribes the Measures of all our *other* Actions; and tho we had never so much *Force* or *Power*, yet unless we had *Understanding* to guide and manage it, it would be altogether insignificant. For *Blind* Power acts at Random, and if we had the Force of a *Whirl-wind*, yet without a *Mind* to steer and manage it, it would be an *equal* Chance whether we did *well* or *ill* with it. So that unless there were some *Understanding* either *within* or *without* us to conduct our *active Powers*, and determine them to our *Good*, we were as good be altogether without them; because while they act by *Chance* it is at least an *equal* Lay whether they will *injure* or *advantage* us.

us. Since therefore *Understanding* is the *Rule* and *Measure* of all our other Powers, it necessarily follows that *it self* is the *greatest* and *noblest* of them all. What an *excellent* Being therefore must a Soul be, in which this *great* and *Sovereign* Power resides? a *Power*, that can collect into it self such *prodigious* Numbers of *simple Apprehensions*, and by comparing *one* with the *other*, can connect them into *true* Propositions, and upon *each* of these can run such *long* and *curious* Descants of Discourse, till it hath drawn out all their Consequents into a Chain of *wise* and *coherent* Notions, and sorted these into such *various* Systems of *useful* Arts and Sciences; That can discern the *Harmonious* Contextures of Truths with Truths, the *secret* Links and Junctures of *coherent* Notions, trace up *Effects* to their *Causes*, and sift the *remotest* Consequents to their *natural* Principles; That can cast *abroad* its *sharp-sighted* Thoughts over the whole *Extent* of Beings, and, like the *Sun* with its *out-stretched* Rays, reach the *remotest* Objects; That can in the *Twinkling of an Eye* expatiate through all the *Universe*, and keep *Correspondence* with *both* Worlds; can prick out the Paths of the *Heavenly* Bodies, and measure the Circles of their Motion, span the whole *Surface* of the Earth, and dive into its *Capacious* Womb, and there discover the *numerous* Offsprings with which it is continually teeming; That can sail into the World of *Spirits* by the *never-varying* Compass of its *Reason*, and discover those *invisible* Regions of *Happiness* and *Misery*, which are altogether out of our sight whilest we stand upon this *hither* Shore; In a word, That can ascend from Cause to Cause, to God who is the



*Cause* of all, and with its *Eagle-Eyes* can gaze upon that *glorious Sun*, and dive into the *infinite Abyss* of his *divine Perfections*. What an *excellent Being* therefore is that *Soul* that is endowed with such a *vast Capacity of Understanding*, and with its *piercing Eye* can reach such an *immense Compass* of Beings, and travail through so *vast an Horizon* of Truth? Doubtless if *humane Souls* had no other Capacity to *value* themselves by, but only this, *this* were enough to give them *Preheminence* over all *inferiour Beings*, and render them the most *glorious Part* of all this *sublunary World*.

2. The *Soul* of Man is of *vast Worth* in Respect of its Capacity of *Moral Perfection*. For by the Exercise of those *human Virtues* which are proper to it in this state of Conjunction with the Body, it is capable of raising it self to the *Perfection* of those *Angelical Natures*, which of all Creatures do most nearly approach and resemble the *great Creator*, and *Fountain* of all *Perfection*. For by keeping a *due Restraint* upon its bodily Appetites, and thereby gradually weaning it self from the *Pleasures* of the *Body*, it may by degrees be *educated* and *trained* up to lead the Life, and relish the Joys of *naked* and *immortal Spirits*; it may be contempered to an *incorporeal State* so as to be able to enjoy it self without *eating* and *drinking*, and live most happily upon the *Fare* of Angels, upon *Wisdom* and *Holiness*, and *Love* and *Contemplation*. And then by governing its *own Will* and *Affections* by the *Laws of Reason* and *Religion*, it may by degrees improve it self so far in all these *Moral Endowments*, which are the *proper Graces* of every *reasonable Nature*, as to be at last as perfectly  
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*wise and reasonable* in its own *Choices and Refusals*, in its *Love and Hatred*, in its *Desires and Delights*, as the *Angels* themselves are. For though it cannot be expected that in this *imperfect* state a *Soul* should arrive to such a Pitch as this, yet even now it may be *growing up* and *aspiring* to it; which, if it doth, as I shall shew you by and by, when *this* is *expired*, it hath *another* Life to live, which being antecedently prepared for by those *spiritual* Improvements it hath made *here*, will furnish it with Opportunities of *improving* infinitely faster than *here* it did, or possibly could. For in that *Life* it shall not only be *freed* from those many Incumbrances which do *here* retard it in its *spiritual* Progress, nor shall it only be associated with a World of *pure and blessed* Spirits, whose *holy* Example and *wise* Converse will doubtless wonderfully edifie and improve it; but be also admitted into a more *intimate* Acquaintance with *God*, who is the *Author* and Pattern of all Perfection; the sight of whose *ravishing* Beauty will *inflame* it with a most *ardent* Love to him, and *excite* it to a most *vigorous* Imitation of him: All which considered, it is not to be imagined how much the state of *Heaven* will immediately *improve* those *happy* Souls that are prepared and disposed for it. But then considering that *Moral Perfection* is as *infinite* as the *Nature* of *God*, in which there is an *Infinity* of *Holiness* and *Justice* and *Goodness* within this *boundless* Subject, there will be Room enough for Souls to make *farther* and *farther* Improvements in, even to *Eternity*. And then when they shall still be growing on so fast, and yet be still *forever* improving, to what a *transcendent* Height of *Glory* and *Perfection* will

they at last arrive? For tho no *finite* Soul can ever arrive to an *infinite* Perfection, yet still it may be growing on to it, because there will still be possible Degrees of it beyond its *present* Attainments; and when it is arrived to the farthest *imaginable* Degree, yet still it will be *capable* of farther, and so farther and farther to all *Eternity*. And if so, O *blessed* God, of what a *Capacious* Nature hast thou made these *Souls* of ours, which tho they will doubtless *improve* in *Goodness* as fast in the *other* Life as is possible for them, with all the Advantages of a *Heavenly* State, yet will never attain to an *utmost* Period, but still be growing *perfecter* and *perfecter* for ever?

3. The Soul of *Man* is of *vast* Worth in Respect of its *immense* Capacities of *Pleasure* and *Delight*: For its Capacity of *Pleasure* must necessarily be as *large* and *extensive*, as its Capacity of *Understanding*, and of *Moral* Perfection; because the proper Pleasure of a Soul results from its own *Knowledge* and *Goodness*, from its *farther* Discoveries of *Truth*, and *farther* Proficiency in *inward* Rectitude and *Virtue*, and consequently as it Improves *farther* and *farther* in *Understanding* and in *Moral* Perfection, it must still gather *more* and *more* Fuel to feed and *encrease* its own Joy and Pleasure. For the Pleasure of every Being consists in the *vigorous* Exercise of its Faculties about *convenient* and *agreeable* Objects; but the *Faculties* of a Soul are *Understanding* and *Will*, to which the only *agreeable* Objects are *Truth* and *Goodness*; and therefore the more *Truth* there is in the *Mind*, and the more *Goodness* there is in the *Will*, the more vigorously will they *imploy* and *exercise* themselves about them, and

and consequently the more they will be *pleased* and *ravished*. Since therefore, every *new* Discovery of *Truth*, and every *new* Degree of *Goodness* gives *new* Life to our *Minds* and *Wills*, and renders both more *sprightly* and *vigorous*, it hence necessarily follows that our Souls are capable of as much *Pleasure* as they are of *Truth* and *Goodness*; and how vastly *Capable* they are of both these I have already shewed you. So that it is not to be imagined by us, who have here so *little* Experience, what *Heavens* of Joy a Soul is *capable* of; only at present we find by Experience that the more we improve in *Knowledge* and *Goodness*, the more *pleasant* and *cheerful* we find and feel *our selves*, and that our *Faculties* still grow more *active* and *lightsom* the more we disburden them of that *Ignorance* and *Sin* that *cloggs* and *incumbers* them. And upon great Proficiencies in *Knowledge* and *Virtue* we find a *strange* Alacrity within our selves; we are as it were in *Heaven* upon Earth, and do feel a *Paradise* springing up within us, the *Fragrance* of whose Joys grows many times so *strong* that our *frail* Mortality can hardly bear them. When therefore such Souls do cast off this Mortality which now doth only fetter and intangle them, and have made their Entrance into the *invisible* Regions of *Blessedness*, how *sprightly* and *active*, how *lightsom* and *cheerful* will they feel themselves? For in the *first* Moment of their Admission, all that *Mist* of *erroneous* Prejudice which now interrupts their Prospect of *Truth*, and all those Remains of *irregular* Affection that check and distract them in their Choice of *Goodness*, will be forever chased from their *Minds* and *Wills* by the *clear* Light of the *Heavenly* State; and their

their Faculties having disburthen'd themselves, and shaken off every Clog, with what *unspeakable* Vigour will they *move* and *act*, especially in the Presence of such *suitable* Objects as the *Heavenly State* will present before them? When *infinite Truth*, and *infinite Goodness* shall be always present to their *free* Minds and undistracted Wills, and nothing shall *interpose* to hinder them either in seeing the *one*, or in chusing the *other*; here will be work enough for both to all *Eternity*; and both being freed from all Incumbrance, the *one* will be discovering every *Moment* farther and farther into that *infinite Truth* which it loves and admires, and the *other* will be improving every *Moment* more and more in that *infinite Goodness* which it chooses and adores. And then every *new* Discovery and *new* Improvement will spring *new* Heavens of Joy in the Soul, and by reason of those *new* Acquests of *Truth* and *Goodness*, which we shall every *Moment* make, we shall every *Moment* be entertained with *new* Pleasures, and so before we have spent *one* Joy, *another* will succeed, and *another* that, and so on *forever*. For when a *God* of *infinite Truth* and *Goodness* becomes the *Objective Happiness* of a *finite* Nature which cannot comprehend and enjoy him, but in an *infinite* Succession, every *new* Delight the *Injoyment* of him creates in us must necessarily raise a *new* Desire, and every *new* Desire immediately find a *new* Delight, and so round again to all *Eternity*. Of what a *vast* Capacity therefore is this Soul of ours, in which there is room enough *successively* to entertain all the *ravishing* Joys and Pleasures that make an *Everlasting Heaven*; That can drink in those *deep Rivers* of Plea-



*Pleasure* as fast as they *spring* up and *flow* from God's right hand for evermore? What Tongue can express the *innumerable* Joys that such a Soul can hold, whose Capacity is so *large* as *Heaven*, and so *near* to *infinite* as to be able to contain all those Joys and Pleasures that *infinite* Truth and *Goodness* can create?

4. And lastly, The Soul of Man is of *vast* Worth in Respect of its Capacity of *Immortality*. For by its Operations it is evident that the Soul is not composed of *Corruptible matter*, but is a *spiritual* and *immaterial* Substance; for if it were *Matter*, it would *act* and *move* only when *other* Matter presses upon it, and not be able to determine the Course of its *own* Motion, but would be forced to move *backwards* or *forwards* according as it was *thrust* on by that *outward* Matter that continually moves and presses upon it, and all its Motions would be as *necessary* as that of a Stone in the *Air*, when it is thrust up by an *impressed* Force, and *pressed* down again by the weight of the *Air* above it: Whereas in this Soul of ours we sensibly *feel* and *experience* a *natural* Liberty of acting, a Power to move it self and to determine its *own* Motions which way it pleaseth; when it is pressed *forward* never so vigorously by the *strong* Impulses of *outward* Objects, it is in its Power to *go on* or *retreat*, and to *divert* the Current of its Thoughts into a quite *contrary* Channel to that whereinto it is thrust and directed by all the Impressions of its Sense. For thus in the midst of the *Alarums* and *Shoutings* of an *Army*, of the *Noises* of Drums and Trumpets ringing in our Ears, our Soul can recollect it self, and reduce its *scattered* Thoughts into *profound* Contemplations



plations of a *sweet* and *Blessed* Peace; and when it is *pressed* from *without* with never so much Importunity to *this* or *that* particular Choice, it is in its Power to *reject* the Motion, and to *choose* the quite contrary. By all which it is *apparent* that the Soul hath an *innate* Liberty of *acting*, that *she* is not *necessitated* from *without* by the *different* Concourses and Motions of the *several* Particles of *Matter*; but that all the Diversity of her *Wills* and *Opinions* is principally owing to her *own* Freedom and Power of self-determination, and to make the *least* doubt of it is to question the *common* Sense and Experience of Mankind. Since therefore the Soul is not determined in its Motions by the *different Pressures* of *material* things as all *other* Matter is, but hath power to *swim* against the *Torrent*, and *move* quite counter to all *foreign* Impressions, it hence necessarily follows that it is *immaterial*. And indeed considering how much its *Operations* do exceed the *utmost* Power of *dull* and *passive* Matter, I cannot but wonder that any Man should be so *for-saken* of his *Reason*, as to rank it among *material* Things; for how is it *possible* that a *Piece* of *dull* *un-active* Matter, that a little *Grass* or *Dirt*, or *Mire*, after all the *Refinings*, *Macerations*, and *Maturations*, that can be *performed* by the help of *Motion* should ever be able to make a *thinking* Being, or grow *up* into the Soul of a *Philosopher*? That a *Company* of *dead* *Atoms*, which cannot move unless they are moved, can ever be *capable* of framing *Syllagisms* in *Mood* and *Figure*, and disputing *pro* and *con* whether they are *Atoms* or no? That such *inert* and *sluggish* Bodies should by their *impetuous* jostling together awaken *one* *another* out of their  
senseless

*senseless* Passiveness, and make *each other* hear and feel their *mutual* Knockings and Jostlings, and then from this *sense* into which they have thus awakened *one another*, and ( which they are as *incapable* of as a *Musical Instrument* is of hearing its *own* Sounds, or taking pleasure in the *harmonious* Aires that are played upon it ) should proceed and consult together to make *wise* Laws, and contrive the *best Models* of *Government* ; to investigate the *Natures* of *Things*, and deduce from them the *several Systems* of *Arts* and *Sciences* ; in a word, how is it possible that a Company of *fluid* Motes and Particles of *Matter* should ever be so artificially complicated and twisted one with another, as to form an *Understanding* that can lift up its *Eyes*, and look beyond all this *sensible* World into that of *immaterial* Beings, and conceive *abstracted* *Notions* of things which can never be *Objects* to any *material* Senses ; such as a *pure* Point, *Equality* and *Proportion* ; *Symmetry*, and *Asymmetry* of *Magnitudes*, the *Rise* and *Propagation* of *Dimensions*, *infinite* *Divisibility*, and the like *Notions* that never were in *Matter*, nor consequently could ever be extracted out of it: That can correct the *Errors* of all our *material* Perceptions, and demonstrate *Things* to be vastly different from what they apprehend and report them; can prove the *Sun*, for instance, to be *one hundred and sixty times* bigger than the *Earth*, when to our *Eye* and *Imagination* it appears no bigger than a Bushel ; that can lodge within it self all that *Mass* of *sensible* *Things* which taketh up so much *Room* without it, and when it hath piled them up upon *one another* in *vast* and most *prodigious* *Numbers* is still as *capacious* of more, as when it was altogether *empty*; in a word,

word, that can grasp the *Universe* with a *Thought*, and comprehend the *whole Latitude of Heaven and Earth* within its *own indivisible Center*; how *senseless* is it to imagine that such *Noble Operations* as these can be performed by a *meer Complex of dead Atoms and senseless Particles of Matter*? And if they cannot, as doubtless they cannot, then from hence it will necessarily follow that the *Soul of Man* is an *immaterial Thing*. Furthermore we see, that tho the *Soul* takes in *Objects* of all *sizes*, yet when once they are *in*, they are not as *Bodies* in a *material Place* in which the *Greater* take up more *Room* than the *Less*: For the *Thought* of a *Mile*, or ten thousand *Miles* doth no more *fill* or *stretch* a *Soul*, than that of a *Foot* or an *Inch*, or a *Mathematical Point*; and whereas all *Matter* hath its *Parts*, and those extended *one without another* into *Length* and *Breadth* and *Thicknes*s, and so is *measurable by Inches, Yards, or solid Measures*; there is no such *Thing* as *measurable Extension* in any thing belonging to the *Soul*. For in *Cogitation* which is the *Essence* of a *Soul*, there is neither *Length*, nor *Breadth*, nor *Thicknes*s, nor is it possible to have any *Conceit* of a *Foot* of *Thought*, or a *Yard* of *Reason*, a *Pound* of *Wisdom*, or a *Quart* of *Virtue*. And if what belongs to a *Soul* be *immaterial*, it will necessarily follow that the *Soul* it self is *immaterial* too, and as such *capable of Immortality*. For *immaterial Natures* being *pure* and *simple*, having neither *contrary Qualities* nor *divisible Parts* in them, as *material Things* have, can have no *Principles of Alteration and Corruption* in them; and being *devoid* of these, they must needs be *capable of living and subsisting for ever*. What *Noble Beings* therefore are the *Souls of Men* which, together

ther with those *vast* capacities of *Understanding*, of *Moral Perfection*, of *Joy and Pleasure*, are naturally capable of *Immortality*, and consequently of *improving* in *Knowledge*, in *Goodness*, and in *Joy and Pleasure* unto all *Eternity*? And therefore certainly a Soul must needs be a most *precious* thing, that can thus *out-live* all *sublunary* Beings and *subsist forever* in so *sublime* a state of *Glory and Beatitude*.

Having thus shewn you the *invaluable* Worth of the Soul in Respect of its *own natural* Capacities, I proceed

2. To shew you of what *vast* Esteem it is in the Judgment of all those, who we must needs suppose to best understand the *Worth* of it; and that is the *whole* World of *Spirits*. For to be sure *Spirits* must best understand the Excellency of *Spirits*, because they have a *clearer* In-sight into each others *Natures*, and a more *immediate* Prospect of the *Virtue*, *Power* and *Excellency* of each others *Faculties*. For as for us, whilst we are in this *imbodied* state, and do understand by *corporeal* Organs, we generally judge of the *Worth* and *Excellency* of Things by the Impression they make upon our Senses, and as these are *more or less* gratified and affected with them, we set a *higher or lower* Value upon them. Since therefore *Spirits* are a sort of *Beings* that cannot touch or affect our *Bodily* Senses, it is impossible we should be *competent* Judges of the *true* Worth and Value of them; and therefore in this matter we ought to be guided by the Judgment of *Spirits*, who must needs be *supposed* to have a more *intimate* Acquaintance with *one anothers* *Natures*. And if we will be guided by these, we shall find the *whole* World of *Spirits*, even from the *highest* to the *lowest*



lowest, unanimously rating the Souls of Men at an *inestimable* Price and Value. And to make this appear, I shall shew you the *vast* Price there is set upon them.

1. By God the Father.
2. By God the Son.
3. By God the Holy Ghost.
4. By the Holy Angels.
5. By the Devils.

1. Let us consider the *vast* Price which God the Father hath set upon Souls. For when he intended to form these *Noble* Beings, and transmit them into *terrestrial* Bodies, that so being compounded with a *sensitive* Nature they might clasp the *Spiritual* and *Animal* Worlds together; he being sensible of the *vast* Hazards and *infinite* Snares they would be *exposed* too, was so deeply concerned for their Preservation, that he thought nothing *too dear* to save and secure them. And *fore-seeing* their Fall from that *terrestrial* Happiness which he *originally* designed them, notwithstanding the *liberal* Care he had taken to preserve them in the *State* of *Innocence*, he designed to remove the *Scene* of their Happiness from *Earth* to *Heaven*, being resolved, if possible, to repair the Loss of a *terrestrial* with a *celestial* Paradise. For which end, instead of the *Covenant* of *Innocence* the *Blessings* whereof by their *Sin* they had *forever* forfeited, he introduces the *Covenant* of *Repentance*, that so by the help of this Plank after their *general* Ship-wrack, they might be preserved, and go safe to the *Shoar* of a *happy* Eternity. And that by this *Covenant* he might the more effectually

ctually recover them, he designed to grant it to them in such a Way, and upon such a *wise* and *weighty* Consideration, as might at once affect them with the *greatest* sense of his *Love* and the *deepest* Awe of his *Severity*; that so whilst by the *former* he *allured*, by the *later* he might *terrify* to Repentance: To which *end* he determined not to grant it to them upon any *other* Consideration than that of *another's* suffering for them, and *undergoing* the Punishment of their Sin in their stead; that so whilst he shewed his *Love* to them in admitting *another* to suffer for them, he might express his *Hatred* to their Sin in not Pardoning it without another's suffering. And that he might manifest *this* his *Love* to them, and *this* his *Hatred* to their Sin in the *highest* Degree, as he admitted *another* to suffer for us, so he resolved to accept no *meaner* Suffering than that of his *own beloved* Son. And that *this* his suffering might be the more *effectual*, he *proposed* to send him down to us into this *lower* World *cloathed* in our Natures, that so he might not only the more familiarly *instruct* us by his *Doctrine* and *Example*, but the more exactly *personate* us in *undergoing* the Punishment of our Sin; and upon his undertaking to undergo it, the most *Merciful* Father agreed to this *Covenant* of *Mercy*, by which he obliged himself to receive us into his Favour upon our *unfeigned* Repentance, and *impower'd* his Son to govern us according to the Tenour of it, that is, to *Crown* us with the *Rewards* of it if we Repented, and *inflict* on us the *Punishments* of it if we went on in our Impenitence. And that there might be nothing wanting to render this Government of his Son *successful* and us *obedient* to it, he also agreed upon *this* his *Mighty*

undertaking to *substitute* to him the *Holy Ghost* to be the *supreme* Minister of his Government, that so by the *Agency* of this *vicarious* Power he might *bow* and *incline* the Hearts of Men to submit unto him, and comply with the Terms of this *Merciful* Covenant in which their *everlasting* Welfare is so abundantly provided for.

This is the *mighty* Project which, for the sake of the Souls of Men, the Father of *Spirits* hath contrived, and upon which he hath acted and proceeded even from their *first* Fall to this very *Moment*; And by this he hath most plainly *expressed* the *high* and great Veneration that he hath of them; for doubtless had they not been exceeding *precious* in his Eyes, he would never have thought it worth the while to project and act, such *mighty* Things to redeem and save them: He would rather have left them to their *own* Fate, and not have concerned himself about them, or not have concerned himself to that Degree as to make them the *Subjects* of such a *vast* Design. For all *wise* Agents measure their Designs by the *Worth* and *Value* of the Things they aim at, and do never lay *great* Projects for the sake of *little* Trifles; and unless *God* had a *mighty* Value for the Souls of Men, his making such *vast* Preparations to save them would be like that *foolish* Emperors raising a *numerous* Army, only to go and gather Cockle-shells.

2. Let us consider the *vast* Price which *God the Son* hath set upon Souls; For it is plain he valued them at that *mighty* Rate, as that for their sakes he willingly undertook to execute this *vast* Design of his *Father*, and that to save these *precious* Beings he thought it would be very well worth his while to  
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come down from *Heaven* and *vail* his *Divinity* in our *Natures*, to put on the *Form* of a *Servant* and make himself of no *Reputation*; to live a *Miserable* Life, and die a *painful* and *accursed* Death. And can we think he would ever have laid down so *vast* a *Price*, as his *Glory* and *Happiness*, his *Life* and *Blood* amounts to for *Things* of a *mean* and *inconsiderable* *Value*? Had he so *low* an *Esteem* of his *Father's* *Bosom*, and his own *Heavenly* *Glory* as to part with them for *Trifles*? Such *slight* *Apprehensions* of *Shame* and *Sorrow*, *Pain* and *Misery*, as to cast himself into them for the sake of *Beings* he had *little* or *no* *Esteem* of? Could any thing but what is *inestimable* countervail to that *Glory* he parted with, and that *Misery* he indured? Or, can you think those *Souls* of *little* *Worth* which the *Son of God* thought *worth* his dying for? No certainly, if we knew nothing of our *Souls* but this, that the *Son of God* thought them a *good* *Purchase* at the *dear* *Price* of his *Bliss*, his *Glory* and his *Blood*; yet from thence we have *infinite* *Reason* to conclude them most *precious* and *inestimable* *Beings*, it being *impossible* that he who doth so perfectly understand the *Worth* and *Value* of *Things*, should ever be so *over-seen* as to pay so *vast* a *Sum* for *slight* and cheap *Commodities*.

3. Let us consider the *vast* *Price* which *God* the *Holy Ghost* hath set upon *Souls*; For 'tis for their sakes that he doth so *Industriously* operate in the *Kingdom* of our *Saviour*, that he takes so much *Pains* in it, as he doth and hath always done, ever since it was *first* erected, to drive on that *blessed* *Design* of making the *Souls* of *Men*, the *native* *Subjects* of it happy. It is upon their *Account* that he hath made so *many* *Revelations* of *God's* *Will* to



the World, and confirmed them by so many Miracles, that so he might extricate those *precious* Beings out of those Labyrinths of Error in which they had involved and lost themselves, and direct them into the way to *true* Happiness. And it is for their good that he still continues shedding forth his *Heavenly* Influences upon them, that he still inspires them with so many *good* Thoughts, importunes them with such *urgent* Motives, presses upon them with such *earnest* Struglings and *vigorous* Efforts, not only of his *preventing* but of his *assisting* Grace too, that if *possible* he may awaken them into a Sense of their Danger, and excite and quicken them to pursue the Methods of their *own* Safety and Happiness. So infinitely *jealous* is this *blessed* Spirit lest these *precious* Beings should Miscarry, that tho one would think them sufficiently *safe-guarded* in their Voyage through this *dangerous* Sea under the Convoy of their *own* Reason, yet he dares not trust them to themselves, but bears them Company all along, and keeps a watchful Eye over them, and when any Rock is nigh he warns them of it, and when they are beset with *evil* Spirits, those *mischievous* Pirates that lie in wait to Captivate and *Inslave* them, he presently comes into their Assistance, and, unless they are resolved to betray themselves, always brings them *off* victoriously. Nay, tho they many times not only yield to these *Piratical* Spirits, but joyn their Forces with them to resist and beat *off* their *merciful* Friend and Deliverer, yet he doth not therefore presently abandon them, but being infinitely concerned for their Rescue follows them even to the Mouth of the Enemies Harbour with his *blessed* Motions and Importunities,  
and

and never gives over the Pursuit of them till he hath either actually recovered, or left them past all Hopes of Redemption. And when he sees that they are utterly lost by their *own* Madness and Folly, and that it is in vain to follow them any farther, he casts a *sorrowful* Look upon them, and like a *grieved* Friend after the *utmost* strugglings and *extream* Efforts of his *affronted* Goodness, unwillingly leaves them to their own *sad* Fate, and gives them *up* as it were with the Tears in his Eyes. And can you think this *blessed Spirit* would be so *industrious* as he is in his Ministry for Souls, that he would take such *infinite* Pains to save them, be so *extreamly urgent* and *solicitous* for their Welfare, if He did not know them to be a sort of Beings of an *inestimable* Worth and Value? O *blessed God*, what are not our Souls *worth*, that are worth all the Pains thy *blessed Spirit* takes to save, and make them *happy*! That not only *thou* thought'st *worth* all those *vast* Thoughts and Counsels, which thou hast spent upon them; that not only thy *Son* thought *worth* all those *vast* Condescensions he stooped to to put those Thoughts in Execution; but thy *blessed Spirit* also thinks *worth* all that *unwearied* Pains and Endeavour, all that *incessant* Care and Importunity which he employs about them to save and rescue them from Sin and Misery? Doubtless those Beings must needs be exceeding *precious*, for whose Safety and Welfare all the *blessed Trinity* are so *unspeakably* concerned.

4. Let us consider the *vast* Price which the *Holy Angels* put upon Souls: For tho they are the Crown and Top of all the Creation of *God*, and do by their *essential* Perfections border *nearest*

upon him, yet such is their Opinion of the Souls of Men that they think it no Disparagement to converse with and minister to them ; but from the beginning of the World till now have been always ready to maintain a *close* Intercourse and *intimate* Correspondence with them ; and so far forth as they are permitted by the Laws of their *invisible* World they are continually attending to stretch forth a *helping* Hand to them in all their Needs and Necessities. Tho they are the most *Illustrious* Courtiers of *Heaven*, yet they disdain not to be the *Life-Guards* of Souls, to *pitch their Tents round about them*, as the *Psalmist* expresses it, *Psal. 34. 8.* And interpose between them and their Danger ; to prompt them *to*, and assist them *in* their Duties ; to strengthen them against, or to remove their Temptations ; to comfort them in their Sorrows, and chase away from them those *malignant Spirits* that are always about them watching all Opportunities to seduce and destroy them. Hence *Heb. 1. 14.* They are said to be *ministring Spirits sent forth to minister for them, who shall be Heirs of Salvation.* And how much they are concerned for the Safety and Welfare of these *precious* Beings they are charged with is evident by that Passage, *Luke 15. 16.* *There is joy in the presence of the Angels of God over one Sinner that repenteth.* So Considerable are the Lives of Souls to the *Angels of God*, that though they are always entertained with the most *ravishing* Pleasures, yet *Heaven* it self cannot divert them from being overjoyed at the Repentance of a *Perishing* Soul, and celebrating its Recovery with a *new* Festival. And when-ever the *happy* News is brought them that such a *dying* Soul is revived, they

they not only attend to it in the *midst* of all their Joys and Triumphs, but upon the hearing of it they shout for Joy, and fill the Heavens with a *new* Acclamation. And when-ever such a *Penitent* Soul hath bidden adieu to the Body, those *blessed* Spirits stand ready to receive and guard it through those *Legions* of *malignant Spirits* that do always infest these *lower* Tracts of Air, and to conduct it safe to those *happy* Abodes where it is to lodge till the Resurrection; for it is said of *Lazarus's* Soul, *Luke 16. 22. That it was carried by Angels into Abraham's Bosom.* All which is a *clear* Demonstration of the *vast* Esteem which those *blessed* Angels have of Souls. For can it be thought that such *noble* Beings who have a *God* and themselves to converse with, and have so *immediate* a Prospect both of *his* Beauty and their *own* to exercise their Faculties and employ their Contemplation, would be so *ready* and *willing* as they are to attend upon Souls, and minister to their Safety and Happyness, if they had not a *mighty* Value and Estimation of them? Surely if these *immortal* Spirits within us were not unspeakably *dear* and *precious*; those *Angelical* Beings who have always the most *sublime* and *enraving* Objects before them to employ and entertain their Faculties, would never have thought it *worth* the while to stickle so zealously in their Affairs, and concern themselves so much about them. And thus our *Saviour* himself argues, *Mat. 18. 10. Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you that in Heaven their Angels do behold the Face of my Father which is in Heaven;* that is, do not undervalue any Soul; for how *mean* or *little* soever some of them may appear to you, they are under



the *Guardianship* of those *blessed* Angels that are the Courtiers of God, and do always attend upon his *Majestick* Presence.

5. And *Lastly*, Let us consider the vast Price which the *Devils* themselves do put upon Souls; for ever since those *malignant* Spirits through their own Pride and Ambition revolted from God, and conspired to make War with *Heaven*, and revenge their Expulsion thence, the *constant* Drift of all their Designs and Actions hath been to seduce and ruine them, being conscious that of all the Beings that are within the reach of their Power, there are none so *dear* to God as these, and that by seducing from him these his most *precious* Creatures, they shall do him the *greatest* spight and most effectually revenge upon him their own Damnation. For doubtless were there any Beings below the Moon more *dear* to God than these, they would bend their Force and Malice against them, and not make these as they do, the *only* Centers of their *mischievous* Activity. Had they any *nobler* Game to fly at, their *ambitious* Malice would disdain to stoop to the Quarry of Souls; but because of all others These are the *noblest* and best worth the ruining, therefore do these *malignant* Spirits turn all their Artillery upon them, and level all their *fiery* Darts against them. And how *ambitious* they are of seducing our Souls, and training them on to Perdition, is evident by the *infinite* Wiles, and Snares, and Stratagemsthey contrive against them; by their *unwearied* Diligence to watch all Opportunities against them; to surprize them where they are *careless*, and assault them where they are *weakest*, and cheat them with *disguised* Suggestions; to inspect  
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their Humours, and apply themselves to their Interest, and nick their Tempers, with convenient *Temperations*. And if after all their Labour, Craft, and Contrivance they can but seise the Game they hunt for, the Blood of a Soul is so *rich* a Draught that they think it a *sufficient* Recompence for all their *painful* and *mischievous* Devices; for St. Peter tells us that they go about like *rearing Lions*, seeking whom they may *devour*. And to be sure those *malignant* Spirits would never be so impertinently *mischievous*, as to spend their time in catching Flies; and did they not know our Souls to be *noble* Preys, they would never go so far about as they do, nor take so much Care and Pains to Catch and Insnare them. So that from their *unwearied* Diligence to seduce and ruin us, we may most certainly conclude either that they are very *foolish* Devils, or that our Souls are very *precious* Beings; but howsoever, their Diligence to destroy them is a *plain* Argument that they esteem them *precious*, it being by no means to be supposed, that such *Wise* and *Intelligent* Beings as they are would so much concern themselves, as they do, about things which they had *little*, or *no* Esteem for.

And thus you see at what a *vast* Rate our Souls are valued by the whole World of Spirits, how from the *highest* to the *lowest*, those *best* and *wisest* Judges of the *just* Worth of Souls do all unanimously concur in a *great* and *high* Estimation. So that whether we value them by their own *natural* Capacities, or by the Estimation of those who are best able to judge of their Worth and Excellency, we have *abundant* Reason to conclude them most *precious* and *inestimable* Beings. And now I shall conclude this Argument with some Inferences.

1. From

1. From hence I infer, by what it is that we ought to value our selves, and estimate the Dignity of *our own* Natures, viz. by our *rational* and *immortal* Souls, those *excellent* Beings that are so *invaluable* in themselves, and so highly esteemed by the *best* and *wisest* Judges. 'Tis this *intelligent* and *immortal* Nature within us; that is the Crown and Flower of our Beings; 'tis by this that we are exalted above the Level of *meer* Animals; by this that we are allyed to Angels, and do border upon *God* himself: And he that values himself by any thing but his Soul, and those things which are its *proper* Graces and Ornaments, begins at the *wrong* End of himself, forgets his Jewels, and estimates his Estate by his Lumber. And yet, *good God*, what *foolish* Measures do the Generality of Men take of themselves? Were we not forced by *too* many *woful* Experiments, it would be hard to imagine that any Creature that believes a *rational* and *immortal* Soul to be a Part of its Nature, should be so *ridiculous* as to value it self, by the *little trifling* Advantages of a *well-coloured* Skin, a suit of fine Cloaths, a Puff of popular Applause, or a *few* Baggs of *white* and *red* Earth; and yet, *God help* us, these are the only things almost by which we value and difference our selves from others. You are a much better Man than your Neighbour; he, alas, is a *poor contemptible* Wretch, a *little, creeping, despicable* Thing, not worthy to be looked upon, or taken notice of by such a one as you. Why in the Name of *God*, what is the Matter? Where is this mighty Difference between you and him? Hath not he a Soul as well as you? a Soul that

that is *capable* to live as long; and to be as *happy* as yours? Yes, yes, 'tis true indeed; but notwithstanding, *God* be thanked, you are another-guess Man than he; for you have a much *handsomer* Body, your Apparel is much more *fine* and *fashionable*, you live in a more *splendid* Equipage, and have a *larger* Purse to maintain it, and your Name *forsooth*, is more in Vogue, and makes a far *greater* Noise in the World. And is this all the Difference between your *mighty* selves and your *pitiful* Neighbours? Alas poor Men! A few Days more will put an End to this, and when your rich Attires are reduced to a *Winding-sheet*, and all your *vast* Possessions to *six Foot of Earth*, what will become of all those little Trifles by which you value your selves? Where will be the *Beauty* or *Wealth*, the *Port* or *Garb*, which you are now so *proud* of? Alas! Now that *lovely* Body looks as *pale* and *ghastly*, that *lofty* Soul is left as bare, as poor and naked as your despised Neighbours. Should you now meet his *wandering Ghost* in the *wide* World of Spirits, what would you have to boast of more than he, now your *Beauty* is withered, your *Wealth* vanished, and all your *outward* Pomp and Splendor shrouded in the *Horrors* of a *silent* Grave? Now you will have nothing distinguish you from the most *Contemptible*, unless you have *wiser* and *better* Souls, and by so much as you were more *respected* for your *Beauty* and *Wealth*, your *Garb* and *Equipage* in this World, by so much will you be more *despised* for your *Pride* and *Insolence*, your *Covetousness* and *Sensuality* in the other. Let us therefore learn to value our selves by that which will abide by us, by our *immortal* Souls and by those *heavenly* Graces which do  
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adorn and accomplish them ; by our *Humility* and *Devotion*, by our *Charity* and *Meekness*, by our *Temperance* and *Justice* ; all which are such *Preeminences*, as will survive our Funerals, and distinguish us from *base* and *abject* Souls for ever. But for a *rational* and *immortal* Creature to prize it self by any such *temporary* Advantages is altogether as vain and ridiculous, as it was for the Emperor *Nero* to value himself for being an *excellent* Fidler.

2ly. From hence also I infer how much we are obliged to live up to the Dignity of our Natures. Should a *stranger* to Mankind be admitted into this *busy* Stage of *humane* Affairs, to survey our Actions, and the *paultry* Designs we drive at, certainly he would hardly imagine that we believed our selves, to be such a noble sort and strain of Beings as we are. If you saw a Man seriously imploying himself in some *sordid* and *beggary* Drudgery, could you imagine that he believed himself to be the Son of a King, and the Heir of a Crown? And when it is so *apparent* that the *main* of our Design is to prog for our *Flesh*, and make a *comfortable* Provision for a few Years Ease and Luxury, who would think that we believed our selves to be *immortal* Spirits that must live *for ever* in an *inconceivable* Happiness or Misery? When we consider the high Rank which we hold in the Creation, the *vast* Capacities which there are in our Natures, and the *noble* Ends which we were made and designed for, are we not ashamed to think how *poorly* we prostitute our selves, and vilify *our own* Faculties by the *sordid* Drudgeries wherein we exercise and imploy 'em? When we think what a Reputation we have throughout all the World of Spirits,  
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what a *vast* Rate we are valued at by *God*, and *Angels*, and *Devils*, are we not confounded to think how we *under-value* our selves by those *low* and *inglorious* Ends, which we pursue and aim at? *O good God*, that thou should'st give me a Soul of an *immortal* Nature, a Soul that is *big* enough for all the Joys which thy *everlasting Heaven* is composed of, and I be such a Wretch to my self, such a Traytor to the Dignity of my *own* Nature, as to give *up* my self and all my Faculties to the Pursuit of such *vain* and *wretched* Trifles? That I who am akin to Angels, should make my self a *Muck-worm*, and chuse *Nebuchadnezzar's* fate to leave Crowns and Scepters, and live among the *salvage* Herds of the Wilderness? That having such a *great* and *noble* Nature, I should content my self to live like a Beast, and aim no *higher* than if I had been born only to eat, and drink, and sleep, and wake for *thirty* or *forty* Years together, and then retire into a *silent* Grave, and be *insensible* for ever? Wherefore in the Name of *God*, let us at last remember what we are, and what we are born to. Let us consider, that we have Faculties that are *capable* of exerting themselves *for ever* in the most *imravishing* Contemplation, and Love of the *eternal* Fountain of Truth and Goodness; of Copying and Transcribing his most *adorable* Perfections, his *Wisdom*, *Goodness*, *Purity*, and *Justice*, from whence the *infinite* Happiness of his Nature derives; and thereby of glorifying us into *living* Images of *God*, and rendring us *like* him both in Beauty and Happiness; in a word, that we have Faculties to converse with Angels and with blessed Spirits, to bear a part in the *eternal* Comfort of their Joys and Praises,

Praises, and to relish all those *unknown* Delights of which their *everlasting Heaven* doth consist. And having such *great* and *noble* Powers in us, is it not a *burning* shame that they should be always condemned to an *endless* Pursuit of Shadows and Impertinencies? Let us therefore rouse up our selves, and shake off this *sordid* and *degenerate* Temper that sinks and depresses us, and makes us act so infinitely *unbecoming* the Dignity of our *immortal* Natures. And since we are descended from and designed for the *Heavenly Family*, let us learn to demean our selves upon Earth, as becomes the Natives of *Heaven*. Let us disdain all *base* and *sordid*, all *low* and *unworthy* Ends of Action, as Things beneath our *illustrious* Rank and Station in the World of Beings, and live in a *continual* Tendency towards, and Preparation for that *Heavenly State* which is the *proper* Orb and Sphere of our Natures.

3ly. From hence also I infer how much they undervalue themselves, that sell their Souls for the Trifles of this World. For since we know beforehand that the Wrath of God is revealed from *Heaven* against all Unrighteousness and Ungodliness of Men, and he hath plainly assured us that our Souls must smart *for ever* for our Sins, it necessarily follows, that whenever we knowingly suffer our selves to be inticed into Sin, we make a *wilful* Forfeiture of our Souls. He that knows that such a Draught, however *sweetned* and made *palatable*, is yet compounded with the Juice of *deadly Nightshade*, and notwithstanding that will have the *poisonous* Draught, is wilfully bent to Murder and Destroy himself. And when we see that the Pleasure of  
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of our Sin draws after it the Ruin of our Souls, and yet will Sin notwithstanding, we do in effect stake our Souls against it, and with our Eyes open, make this *desperate* Bargain, that upon Condition we may enjoy such a *sinful* Pleasure, we will willingly surrender up our *immortal* Spirits to the Pains of an *endless* and *intolerable* Damnation. And if so, *O blessed God*, how do the Generality of Men depreciate and undervalue themselves? For how often do we see Men in their *little* Frauds and Cozenages, sell their Souls for a Penny gain; in their *lascivious* and *intemperate* Humours, barter their Souls for a Moments Mirth or Pleasure; in their *ambitious* Projects and Designs, part with their Souls for a Blast of *vulgar* Breath and *popular* Noise. For in every Temptation to Sin the Devil cheapens our *immortal* Souls, bids so much *Pleasure*, or so much *Profit* for them; and in every Compliance with the Temptation we take his Offer, and strike the *fatal* Bargain; So that if we will Sin, we had need Sin for something since we must pay so dearly for it. But alas! there is no Proffer the Devil can make us, that is a *tolerable* Price for the Blood of our Souls; though he should offer us the *whole* World for it, our *Saviour* assures us that he would bid us infinitely to our Loss; and if so, what *wretched* Sales do we make of our Souls, when we Sin for Trifles, *lie* and *cheat* to get a Penny, consent to a *wicked* Motion for a Pleasure that will wither while we are smelling to it, and expire in the very Injoyment? For so much we value our Souls at, and do in effect declare, that in our Esteem these *precious* Beings, which *God* and *Angels* set so high a Price on, are worth  
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no more than what that *Profit* or *Pleasure*, for which we Sin, amounts to. *O good God!* What *cheap* and *worthless* Things then are our Souls in our Esteem, who sell and barter them every Day for such *mean* and *worthless* Trifles? How do we part with our *Gold* for *Dross*, and exchange our *Jewels* for *Pebbles*? What *sordid* Thoughts, what *wretched vile* Opinions have we of our selves, that are so ready upon all Occasions to sell our selves for nought, or which is next to nought, for the *sorry* Proffers of every *base* and *infamous* Lust? O would to God we would at last make but a *just* Estimate of our selves, and thereupon resolve, as it is most *reasonable* we should, never to comply with any *sinful* Motion, till we can get more by it than our Souls are worth, and then I am sure we should be *for ever* Deaf to all the Proffers which the *Devil* or *World* can make us.

4ly. And *lastly*, From hence also I infer how much we are obliged above all things to take Care of our Souls: For since they are Beings of such *vast* Capacities in themselves, and of such an *high* Estimation in the World of Spirits, methinks we should all be convinced that to take leave of their Welfare, and prevent their *everlasting* Miscarriage, is the *highest* Concern and Interest of a Man. And yet, *God* forgive us, if we consult the *common* Practice of Mankind, we shall find that there is scarce any thing in which we have any Interest at all, that is more *slighted* and *disregarded* by us. Our Body is the Darling that hath our Hearts, and takes up all our Care and Thoughts; and to entertain its Appetite, and accommodate it with Pleasures and Conveniencies, there is no Expence either of Labour

hour or Time grudged, or thought much of; but as for the Soul, that *precious* and *immortal* Thing which will be living and perceiving *unspeakable* Pleasures or Pains when this Body is *dead* and *insensible*, that is overlooked as a Thing not *worthy* our *serious* Notice or Regard. And though we cannot but be *sensible* how much it is diseased in all its Faculties, how much its *Understanding* is overloaded with *Error* and *Ignorance*, its *Will* festered with *unreasonable* Malice and Obstinacy, and its *Conscience* oppressed with Loads of Guilt *sufficient* to sink it to the *nethermost* Hell; yet we seem for the Generality to be no more concerned at it; than if its Ruin or Recovery were equally indifferent to us. We can set it perishing before our Eyes, without any Remorse or Compassion; we can pass Day after Day without making the *least* Offer or Attempt to recover it, without offering up a Prayer for it, or entertaining a *serious* Thought what will become of it *for ever*. O *insensible* Creatures that we are, thus to neglect and abandon the most *precious* Part of our selves! The Part that makes us Men, and by which alone we are *capable* of being *happy* or *miserable* *for ever*. Let me therefore beseech and conjure you, even by all that is *sacred* and *serious*, by every thing that is *dear* and *precious* to you, by your *best* Hopes, and the most *important* Concern of your *everlasting* Fate, to take pity upon your *perishing* Souls, to consider the *amazing* Dangers whereunto you have exposed them, and to consult the Means of their Recovery; to prick and affect your Hearts with the Sense and Consideration of their *impending* Ruin, till you have forced them to cry out *what shall we do to be saved*; to bath their

Wounds with the Tears of Repentance, and to pour into them that most *sovereign* Balm of a *serious* Purpose and Resolution of Amendment ; to pray earnestly for them, and keep a *continual* Guard about them, and to strive vigorously with those *sinful* Inclinations that threaten to sink and ruin them. And if we will be but *content* to undergo these *necessary* Cares and Pains to secure them, we shall be sure when they leave these Bodies to reap the Fruits of all in the Possession of an unspeakably *happy* and *glorious* Eternity.

II. I proceed now to the Second Proposition contained in these Words, *that our precious Souls may be lost.* And this our Saviour here plainly supposes, *If he gain the whole World, and lose his own Soul.* The Greek Word is *ζημιωδῆν*, which properly signifies to receive a Mulf, or to suffer Damage ; and therefore it is here opposed to *κερδισθαι*, *if he shall gain*, So that the Word doth not denote the absolute Loss or Extinction of the Soul, but its undergoing some *dreadful* Mulf, or suffering some irreparable Damage. For as *Hierocles* hath observed *ὅς οἷοντε ἀθανάτω ἔσθ' αὖ θανάτῳ μοῖρα μεταλῆσθαι, ἐν τῇ οἷς τὸ μὴ εἶναι ἐκλάσθαι, ἀλλὰ τῇ τε εἶναι ἀποτρίβασθαι* Immortal Substances cannot so die as to lose their Being, but so, as to lose their Well-being they may. And accordingly our Saviour himself calls the Punishment of the Wicked in Hell Fire, destroying them, *Mat. x. 28.* *Fear not them which kill the Body ---- but fear him which is able destroy both Soul and Body in Hell.* Where by *destroying*, he doth not mean putting a final End to their Being, but putting them into an irrecoverable State of Ill-being ;  
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for in this State of Destruction, they still continue to act, to *weep and wail*, and *gnash their Teeth*, as *Christ* elsewhere tells us, *Mat. xiii. 42.* which Actions plainly suppose their Continuance in Being, though in a most *wretched and deplorable* Ill-being. So that by the Loss of the Soul here is not meant the Destruction of its Being, but its being exposed to an *irreparable* Damage in the *other* World. And to prove that in this Sense a Soul may be lost, I shall endeavour these two Things.

*First*, To shew you what Damages the Soul is liable to in the *other* World.

*Secondly*, Upon what Accounts it is liable to, and in Danger of them.

I. What Damages the Soul is liable to in the *other* World. To which I answer, that there is a *seven-fold* Damage whereunto the Soul of Man may be exposed *hereafter*:

1<sup>st</sup>. It is liable to be deprived of the *highest* Happiness it is capable of.

2<sup>ly</sup>. It is liable to the most *dreadful* Punishment and Correction of the Father of Spirits.

3<sup>ly</sup>. It is liable to the Fury and Violence of Devils, and other *malignant* Spirits.

4. It is liable to be confined to the most *dismal* and *uncomfortable* Abodes.

5<sup>ly</sup>. It is liable to the *perpetual* Vexations of its own *cross*, *wild*, and *furious* Passions.

6<sup>ly</sup>. It is liable to the *intolerable* Anguish of its own *guilty* Conscience.



7ly. It is *liable* to indure all these *dismal Things* for ever.

1st. The Soul of Man is *liable* to be deprived of the *highest* Happiness it is *capable* of. The *highest* Happiness that a Soul is *capable* of is to enjoy God, that is, to *know*, and *love*, and *resemble* him; and to be admitted into the *noble* Society of those *pure*, and *blessed* Spirits that do thus enjoy him; of all which Happiness a Soul may be for ever deprived by its own *vicious* and *depraved* Temper. For besides that by such a Temper it may provoke the *just* and *holy* God, who hath the Disposal of the fate of Souls, to deprive it of, and banish it from this Happiness for ever; it may thereby also utterly *incapacitate* it self from ever enjoying it; it may promote and raise that Temper to such a Degree of *Aversion* and *Antipathy* to God, and *canker* it into such an *inveterate* Enmity to all the Perfections of his Nature, as that at last it may be utterly *incapable* of any such *beatifical* Knowledge of them, as can any ways incline it to love and imitate him: For the *Apostle* tells us, that the *carnal Mind* is *empty* to God, Rom. viii. 7. From whence it is evident, that in every Degree of Sin, there is a Degree of *Aversion* to God, which *Aversion* may be improved into such an *implacable* Malice against him, as that our Knowledge of him, instead of *endearing* him to us, or *ingaging* us to imitate him, may only *avert* us from, *provoke*, and *irritate* us against him, and by presenting to us those *immense* Perfections, for which he deserves our *dearest* Love, and *deepest* Adoration, may only fill our Minds with the *greater* Rage and more *invincible* Horror. And when  
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the Soul is arrived to such a Degree of Malignity against *God*, it is as *impossible* for it to enjoy him, as to be *recreated* with Torment, or delighted with the Objects of its own *Antipathies*. And for the same Reason also it must be *incapable* of enjoying the Society of *blessed Spirits*, because it hath acquired a Temper that is infinitely *repugnant* to their *Heavenly Genius*; so that if such a *prejudiced* Soul should, when it is arrived into *Eternity*, find the Gates of *Heaven* open to receive it, it would doubtless be so offended at every thing that is *Heavenly*, so startled at the Sight of *God*, and the Displays of his *hated* Perfections, and seized with such a Horror against those *god-like* Beings that dwell there, and are perpetually *contemplating* and *adoring*, *loving* and *imitating* him, that it would fly away of its own Accord from that *blissful* Habitation, as Bats and Owls do from the Light of the Day, and rather chuse to banish it self into *eternal* Darkness and Despair, than be shut up *for ever* in a *Heaven* so infinitely *repugnant* to its Nature. And certainly to be thus excommunicated from the *supreme* Happiness of our Natures, and be forced to live in *everlasting* Exile from *God* and *blessed Spirits*, and wander about like *wretched* Vagabonds that are chased and driven from all Hopes of Contentment, will be *unspeakable* Damage to our Souls.

2ly. The Soul of Man is liable to the most *dreadful* Punishment and Correction of the *Father of Spirits*. There is no Doubt but *spiritual* Agents can strike as immediately upon *Spirits*, as *bodily* Agents can upon *Bodies*; and though we who are Spectators only of *corporeal* Action cannot discern the Manner how *one* Spirit acts upon *another*, yet there

is no Reason to Doubt of the thing ; and if there be such a *mutual* Communication of Action between them, there is no Doubt but they can mutually make *each other* feel each others Pleasures and Displeasures ; and if so, then it is only to suppose that the *less powerful* Spirits are subject to the *violent* Impression of the *more powerful* ones, and consequently that all *finite* Spirits are liable to the Lash of an *infinite* one ; for why should it be more *difficult* for the Father of our Spirits to correct our Spirits, than it is for the Parents of our Flesh to correct our Flesh ? For though our Souls are no more *impressible* with *material* Stripes than Sunbeams are with the blows of a Hammer, yet are they liable to *horrid* and *dismal* Thoughts, and to be as much pained and aggrieved by them, as our Bodies are by the most *exquisite* Torments. So that if *God* be displeased with us, he can imprint his Wrath upon our Minds in *black* and *ghastly* Thoughts, and cause it perpetually to drop like *burning Sulphur* upon our Souls. He cannot only abandon us to the *furious* Reflections of our own *natural* Consciences, which, as I shall shew you by and by, will be *hereafter* extreamly *painful* and *vexations*, but he can also infuse *supernatural* Horrors into us, and pour in such Swarms of *terrible* Thoughts upon us as will give us no Rest, but sting us perpetually Day and Night with *inexpressible* Anguish. And of this you have a *woful* Example in that *miserable* Wretch *Francis Spira*, who, upon that *fearful* Breach he made in his Conscience by a *cowardly* Renouncing of his *Religion*, was without any Symptoms of a *badly* Melancholy immediately seized with such an *inexpressible* Agony of Mind



Mind as *amazed* his Physicians, *astonished* his Friends, and *struck* Terror into all that conversed with him. For he was so *near* to the Condition of a *damned Ghost*, that he verily believed *Hell* it self was more *tolerable* than those *invisible* Lashes that were continually laid upon his Soul; and therefore wished he were in *Hell*, and would gladly have dispatched himself thither in hope to find Sanctuary there from those *vengeful* Thoughts which continually preyed upon his Soul. And if in this World our Soul is so *liable* to the Rod of the *Father of Spirits*, we may be sure it will be so in the *other* too, where *God*, if he pleases can render it an *eternal Hell* to it self by pouring continually into it *fresh* Floods of *horrible* Thoughts, which being thrust on by an *Almighty* Power, and perpetually urged and repeated on the Mind, must necessarily create in it not only *exquisite*, but *uninterrupted* Torment. And it being in his Power thus to lash our Souls, to be sure when once he is implacably incensed against them, (as he will be *hereafter*, if we do not appease him.) he will let loose his Power upon them, and make them feel his *wrathful* Resentments in those *dire* and *frightful* Thoughts with which he will Sting and Scourge them *for ever*. And if the Soul carry into *Eternity* with it those *provoking* Lusts which do here incense God's Displeasure against it, it will there have no Shelter from the Storm of his Vengeance, which like a Shower of *Fire* and *Brimstone*, will be continually pouring down upon it. For while it continues in this Shop of Vanities, it hath a *great* Variety of Objects to divert those *dismal* Thoughts which *God* many times infu-



ses into it; but in the *other* World all these *diverting* Objects will be removed, and then every *dismal* Thought which *God* lets loose will seize and fasten upon it, and like *Prometheus's* Vultures, prey on its *wretched* Heart *for ever*.

3ly. The Soul of Man is *liable* to the Fury and Violence of *Devils*, and other *malignant* Spirits. For when ever the Souls of Men do leave their Bodies, they doubtless flock with the Birds of their *own* Feather, and consort themselves with such *separate* Spirits as are of their *own* Genius and Temper; for besides that Likeness doth naturally *congregate* Beings, and cause them to associate with their *own* Kind, *good* and *bad* Spirits are by the *eternal* Laws of the *other* World distributed in *two separate* Nations, and there live apart from one another, having no *other* Communication or Intercourse but what is between *two hostile* Countries that are continually designing and attempting one against *another*. So that when *wicked* Souls do leave this *terrestrial* Abode, and pass into *Eternity*, they are presently incorporated by the Laws of that *invisible* World into the Nation of *wicked* Spirits, and confined *for ever* to their most *wretched* Society and Converse; and then how *miserable* must their Condition be, who are damned to such a *hellish* Neighbourhood, and are allowed no *other* Company but Devils and *devilish* Spirits? For since, as I have already shewed you, Spirits can as well act upon *one another* as Bodies, what can be expected when such *malignant* Spirits meet, but that they should be continually snarling among themselves, and baiting and worrying *one another*? When *Wrath* and *Envy*, *Malice* and *Ill-nature*

*nature* are the *common* Genius that inspires and acts the *whole* Society, what can their Conversation be, but a *continual* Intercourse of *mutual* Mischiefs and Vexations; especially considering how they have here laid the Foundations of an *eternal* Quarrel against *one another*? For *there* the Companions in Sin will meet, who by their *ill* Counsels, *wicked* Insinuations, and *bad* Examples did mutually contribute to *each others* Ruin; and when these shall meet in that *woful* State, how will the tormenting Sense of those *irreparable* Injuries they have done *each other* incite them to exercise their *hellish* Fury upon, and play the Devils with *one another*? And when a Company of *waspyish* Spirits so implacably incensed against *one another* shall meet, and like so many *Scorpions*, *Snakes*, and *Adders* be shut up together in the *infernal* Dens, how is it possible they should forbear *hissing* at, and *stinging*, and *spitting* Venom in *one anothers* Faces. But then besides the *mutual* Plagues which those *incensed* and *furious* Spirits must needs be supposed to inflict upon *one another*, they will be also nakedly exposed to the *powerful* Malice of the Devils, those *fierce* Executioners of Gods *righteous* Vengeance, who, as *we now* find by Experience have Power to suggest *black* and *horrid* Thoughts, and to torture our our Souls with such *dreadful* Imaginations, as are far more *sharp* and *exquisite* than any *bodily* Torment. And if *now* they have such Power over us when God thinks fit to let them loose, what will they have *hereafter*, when these our *wretched* Spirits shall be wholly abandoned to their Mercy, and they shall have a *free* Scope to exercise their Fury upon us, and glut their *hungry* Malice

Malice with our Vexations and Torments? It seems at least a mighty *probable* Notion that that *horrid* Agony of our *Saviour* in the Garden which caused him to *shriek* and *groan*, and *sweat* as it were *great* Drops of Blood, was only the Effect of those *preternatural* Terrors which the Devils, with whom he was then in Combat, impressed upon his *innocent* Mind. And if they had so much Power over his *pure* and *mighty* Soul that was so strongly guarded with the most *perfect* and *unspotted* Virtues, what will they have over ours when God hath abandoned us to them, and throws us as Preys into their Mouths? with what an *hellish* Rage will they fly upon our *guilty* and *timorous* Souls, in which there is so much Tinder for their *injected* Sparks of Horror to take Fire on? When therefore our *guilty* Spirits shall not only be *liable* to the Scourge of God, but Devils and *damned* Ghosts too shall have their *full* Swing at them, doubtless the *Hell* within them will be far more *intollerable* than any *Hell* of Fire and Brimstone without them.

4<sup>ly</sup>. The Soul of Man is also *liable* to be confined to the most *dismal* and *uncomfortable* Abodes. What or where the Abode of *wicked* Spirits is till the Morn of the Resurrection, is no where expressly determined in the *Holy Scripture*; but since, wheresoever they are, they are doubtless under the Power and Dominion of the Devil, who, as the *Scripture* assures us, is *Prince of the Power of the Air*; it is highly *probable* that their *present* Residence is in these *lower* Regions of the World; that either being chased by those *infernal* Powers under whose Tyranny they are, they are continually

ly hurrying about in these *inferiour* Tracts of Air, or, which perhaps is more *probable*, that they are imprisoned by those *invisible* Ministers of the *divine* Justice within the *dark* Abysses and *under-ground* Vaults of the Earth, and not permitted, but upon *special* Occasions, to come abroad into this *upper* Region of Light and Liberty. But wheresoever they are, it is doubtless in some such *horrid* and *dismal* Prison, as is fit only to receive such *vile* and *desperate* Malefactors, and secure them till the *great* Assizes, when they shall be brought forth to receive their Tryal and *final* Judgment: And then being united to their Bodies, and thereby made *liable* to *corporeal* Torments, the *Scripture* expressly affirms that they shall be shut up in *everlasting* Flames, and be tormented *for ever* in a Lake of Fire and Brimstone; for then the *Lord* himself shall come in Flames of Fire to render Vengeance to all those that obeyed not his Gospel; and having with those *raging* Flames set every Part of this *lower* World on Fire, he will *re-ascend* with all his Train to the *celestial* Mansions, and leave the *Wicked* weltring *for ever* in this *burning* Vault below; for it is plain, that the *everlasting* Fire to which he will then Sentence them is the Conflagration of the World, which, after the *Just* are raised, and caught up in the Clouds above the Reach of its *aspiring* Flames, shall break forth on every side, and turn all this *Atmosphere* into a Furnace of *inquenchable* Fire, and therein shall those *wicked* Miscreants that would not be reclaimed, be condemned to live *for ever*. For the Judgment being ended, the *Judg* and all his Retinue shall return, and leave them in the midst of a *burning* World  
sur-



surrounded with *Smoke* and *Fire*, *Darkness* and *Confusion*, and wrapt in *fierce* and *merciless* *Flames*, which shall stick close to and pierce through and through their Bodies, and for ever prey upon, but never consume them. And what an *intolerable* Multitude this is, I leave every Mans *natural* Sense to judge.

5ly. The Soul of Man is also *liable* to the *perpetual* Vexations of its own *cross*, *wild*, and *furious* Passions. We have *sufficient* Experience in this Life how *vexations* our *cross* and *excessive* Passions are; for when our Passions are divided, and *contrary* Objects have raised *contrary* Desires and Appetites in us, how do they rend and distract our Souls, and cause *perpetual* Mutinies and Tumults within us? But by Reason of those many *sensual* Gratifications with which we now make a shift to stop the Mouths of those Daughters of the Horse-leech, when they cry out *give, give*; we cannot be so *sensible* of the Trouble and Vexation of them; unless we now subdue and mortifie them, we shall be forced to carry them into *Eternity* along with us. For by being *separated* from their Bodies the Souls of Men are never *separated* from their *prevailing* Tempers, but in their *separated* State are for the main of the *same* Disposition as they were *here*: and do retain the *same* Passions and Appetites. 'Tis true, they cannot be supposed to retain their *bodily* Appetites after they have thrown off their Bodies, but when they have wholly *accustomed* themselves in this Life to *fleshy* Pleasures, and have never Experienced *spiritual* ones, it is impossible but that in the *other* they should be tormented with an *outrageous* Desire of being

being *imbodied* again ; that so being *incapable* of relishing any *other*, they may repeat those *fleshy* Pleasures which heretofore they were accustomed to, and act over the *bruish* Scene anew. And this *vehement* Hankering of these *carnalized* Souls to return into their *Bodily* State, is perhaps the only Sensuality that a *separate* Soul is *capable* of ; but it is such a Sensuality as must necessarily render such Souls extremely *miserable* ; for in *that* State it will be like the Hunger of a *Starving* Man that is immured between *two dead* Walls, that is, it will be a *fierce* Desire without Hope of Satisfaction, a *corroding* Hunger, sharpened with Despair of Food, than which there is nothing more intolerably *grievous* and tormenting. For how will it vex the *wretched* Spirit to look back from the Shores of Eternity into this *corporeal* World, and to ruminate thus with it self ; O *miserable* Creature that I am ! here am I cast away for ever upon a *strange* and *desolate* Shore, where I must *Famish* for want of Food, pine away a long Eternity, and wander to and fro for ever tormented with *restless* Rage and hungry *unsatisfied* Desires ; where is not one Pleasure that I can relish, not an Object that I can taste any *sweetness* in. *Wo* is me ! yonder are all my Joys and Comforts, all that is dear and precious to me. O that I might go back again, and be once more restored to the *Injoyment* of them ! but alas ! between me and them there runs an *impassible* Gulph, that deprives me of all hope of *returning* ! For thus will the *unhappy* Soul torment it self with an *outrageous* Longing for that which it can never hope to enjoy. But then besides this Appetite of Sensuality which it will there be vexed with, it will also carry along with it all that *Envy* and *Malice*,

*Malice, that Wrath and Impatience, Pride and Insolence* which it here contracted; which *Black and Hellish* Passions will prove *perpetual Furies* in its Bosom; For in that *wretched State* it will not only have Objects always *present*, to excite them, but such Objects too as will excite them all at once to the most *outrageous* Excesses. For when all at once it shall see others advanced to the *greatest* Heights of Glory and Happiness, and it self not only rejected but abandoned to *endless* Misery, the Sense of this must necessarily irritate all its *devilish* Passions to the *highest* Extremities, and cause its *Pride* to swell, its *Envy* to burst, and its *Wrath* to boil into a *Diabolical Fury*; and what a *continual Hell* must this create in the Soul, to be perpetually worried with so many *black and rabid* Passions, to have all its *inferiour* Parts and Affections, like those of the *Monster Scylla* whom the Poets talk of, as so many Dogs continually *barking and snarling* at one another, and yet remain *unseparable*, as being *Comparts* of the *same Substance*?

6ly. The Soul of Man is also *liable* to the *intolerable* Anguish of its own *guilty* Conscience. *The Spirit of a Man*, says Solomon, *can bear his Infirmities, but a wounded Spirit who can bear?* Intimating that of all the Passions which *humane* Nature is *liable* to, there are none so *grievous* as that of a Mind awakened with a sense of Guilt. And of the Truth of this we have some Experience even in this Life, tho now we can make a shift either to divert our selves by our *sensual* Mirth and Jollities, from listening to the Clamours of our *guilty* Minds, or else to deceive our selves into a *groundless* Peace by *indulgent* and *fallacious* Principles; but unless

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we expiate our Guilts here, we shall carry them into Eternity with us, where all those *sensual* Pleasures, with which we now divert our selves from reflecting on our Actions, will be removed, and all those *fallacious* Principles, with which we cheat and deceive our selves, will be baffled by a *woful* Experience. So that then our Soul will be nakedly exposed to the Lash of its own *furios* Thoughts, and having nothing to guard or defend it self against the *cutting* Reflections of a *guilty* Conscience, which being roused up and kept awake by the *unintermitting* sense of our Misery will be always clamouring upon us, and continually torturing our *wretched* Minds with *sharp* and *vexations* Reflections : and besides, whilst our Soul doth act by *bodily* Instruments, and work in this Mire of Flesh, it is *impossible* it should be so *nimble* and *expedite* in its Motions, as it will be when it is a *naked* Spirit. For then its Perceptions will be much *clearer*, its Convictions more *strong* and *evident*, and all its Reflections *active* as the Lightning, and *quick* as the Wing of an Angel. So that whereas now the *sharpest* Stings of our Conscience have an Intermixture of Fancy and Imagination in them, being *gross* and *material* Powers do dull and rebate the Edge of them, and render them less *pungent* and *sensible* ; when we are *stripped* out of our Flesh, and sent *naked* into the *other* World, we shall have no Clog about us to break or allay those *sharp* Reflections with which we shall be forced to lash our selves *for ever*. And then our Conscience will cut to the quick, and sting with a *corroding* Venom ; then will the Remembrance of those Guilts which brought our  
Mise-



Miseries upon us, rouse up such a Swarm of Horrors in our Minds, as we shall be *able* neither to avoid nor indure. For the Sense of our Misery will be every Moment suggesting those Guilts to our Minds that were the Cause of it, and continually upbraiding us with those *desperate* Follies by which we ran our selves into it; the Consideration of which will cause us to hate and curse our selves *for ever*, and to discharge our Fury upon *our own* Heads, which will make our Soul turn Devil to it self, and force it to be its *own* Executioner. For it being now *conscious* to it self that its Miseries are nothing else but the *rueful* and *pitiless* Deserts of its *own* Folly and Madness, it will be continually meditating *horrible* Reflections and singing Satyrs on it self. So that while it is wandering among *wretched* Ghosts through the *dismal* Shades below, it will never cease lashing it self with its *own sharp* and *stinging* Thoughts, till it hath chafed it self into a Fury, and boiled up its *self-condemning* Rage into *everlasting* Madness.

7ly. And lastly, The Soul of Man is also *liable* to endure all these *dismal* things *for ever*: For that our Souls are naturally *immaterial* and *immortal*, I have already proved; so that if God in his *infinite* Justice shall think fit to sentence *wicked* Souls irrecoverably to all these above named Miseries, they must by the Constitution of their *own* Natures live in, and undergo them for ever. And that he doth think to pronounce and execute such a Sentence upon them, he himself hath assured us; for so in *Scripture* he hath plainly declared, that their Punishment shall be *everlasting*, *Mat. 25. 7.* These, saith he speaking of the Wicked, shall go  
away

away into everlasting Punishment: and accordingly the Fire in, and with which they are to be punished, is called *everlasting fire*, *Mat. 25. 41.* and that that they shall subsist for ever in this Fire, and be co-eternal with it, is evident by those Passions and Actions that are attributed to them in it; for *Rev. 14. 11.* they are said to *have no rest day nor night* in it, but to be in a *continual unintermitting Fever*, that will necessary burn and scorch them, and not allow them the *least* Intervals of Ease or Comfort. And in *Mat. 13. 42.* the *bitter Anguish* which they shall endure in this Fire is described by their *weeping*, and *wailing*, and *gnashing their Teeth*; which Actions are *plain* Indications not only of their subsisting in this *everlasting Fire*, but of the *extream* Horror and Anguish that they shall therein endure. And indeed when God sentences any *immortal* Being to Misery, its Misery must be supposed to continue as long as it lives, and consequently to continue *for ever*, since it is to subsist and live *for ever*. And what a *fearful* Accession is this to all those above named Miseries? If we were to endure the *softest* and most *gentle* Pain without any Interval for *thirty*, *forty*, or a *hundred* Years, the Prospect of that which is to come would render that which is *present* so *intolerable*, that we should quickly grow weary of our Lives, and wish our selves in our Graves. Lord! what shall we then do when we come to languish out a *long Eternity* in the *tormenting* Agonies of *dammèd* Ghosts? How will it imbitter every *present* Torment to us, to think of that *never-ending* Duration of Torment to come, that after we have consumed *Millions of Millions* of Ages on the

Rack, we have still an *eternal Hell* behind, and are as far *distant* from the End of our Misery, as we were when it *first* began? O! now if we could die and be *insensible for ever!* what *welcome* Tidings would it be? how gladly should we receive that *fatal* Blow that could put an End to a *woful* Eternity? But now it will be in vain for us to cry, O *Death, Death, have mercy upon us, and dispatch us quickly into an eternal Grave!* For Death is *deaf* and cannot hear, every Moment it stabs and wounds, but *woe is me!* it cannot kill; it strikes and strikes but cannot strike home, and so is forced to continue as struggling under the Pangs of an *immortal* Death. If there were any Prospect of an End of our Misery, though it were after a *Million* of Ages, this would give some Ease to the *languishing* Sufferer; But *never, never---* O how that *fatal* Word stabs the *wretched* Soul, and rankles its Anguish into *eternal* Desperation! For to be in *extream* Misery, and see no End of it, is the Perfection of Hell, and the *utmost* Possibility of Damnation.

And thus have I endeavoured to represent unto you the *fearful* Mulets our Souls are *liable* to in the *other* World; which are such as, one would think, were *sufficient* to awaken the most *stupid* and *insensible* Creature.

II. I now pass on to the *second* thing proposed, which was to shew you upon what Accounts it is that our Souls are *liable* to these *dreadful* Things; or what it is that exposes us to the Danger of them. In general, it is *our own* Sin and Wickedness, which doth not only incense the *holy* God against

against us, who is of *purser* Eyes than to behold Iniquity, and provoke and urge him to inflict these *endless* Miseries upon us as the *just* Retributions of our *desperate* Folly and Obstinacy; but doth also by its own *natural* Causality prepare us for, and sink us into that *miserable* State: So that if *God* should not damn us, yet *our own* Wickedness would; the Misery of Damnation being *little* else but the Perfection and Consummation of Sin. For the Sting of *eternal* as well as *temporal* Death is Sin, and it is *Goodness* and *Wickedness* that makes *Heaven* and *Hell*, those two *opposite* Hemispheres of the *Invisible* World; and as, if *Goodness* were plucked out of *Heaven*, it would cease to be *Heaven*, and be overcast immediately with the *dismal* Shades of *Hell*; so if *Wickedness* were banished out of *Hell*, it would be *Hell* no longer, but presently clear up into Light and Serenity, and shine forth into a *glorious* *Heaven*; But wheresoever Sin and Wickedness reigns, there is *Hell* and Damnation in its *necessary* Causes. Since therefore in *necessary* Causes that which is the Cause of the Cause is also the Cause of the Effect, our *best* way to be resolved what it is that renders us *liable* to these *future* Miseries, will be to enquire what it is that renders us *liable* to fall into a *sinful* Condition at the *present*; for whatsoever renders us *liable* to Sin, must necessarily expose us to the Danger of Misery. Now the Danger of our falling into and continuing in a State of Sin, proceeds from these *following* Causes.

1. From the *natural* Liberty of our Wills to *Good* and *Evil*.



2ly. From the many Temptations to *Evil* among which we are placed,

3ly. From the more *close* and *intimate* Access which these Temptations have to us, than the *contrary* Motives to *Goodness*.

4ly. From the *great* Correspondence of these Temptations with the *corrupt* Inclinations of our Nature.

5ly. From the *unwearied* Diligence and *great* Subtily of the Devil to make Use of, and apply these Temptations to us,

6ly. From the *plausible* Pretences we are furnished with to *excuse*, and *justify* our Compliance with them.

7ly. From the *extream* Difficulty which this our Compliance brings us under to *reject* and *vanquish* them for the future.

1. We are *liable* to fall into a *sinful* State, and from thence into *eternal* Misery from the *natural* Liberty of our Wills to *Good* and *Evil*. If indeed we were necessarily determined to *Good*, our Happiness would be intailed upon our Natures, and it would be as *impossible* for us to be *miserable*, as it is for the Fire to *freeze*, or for the Ice to *burn*; but to be so determined I am apt to think is not *consistent* with the condition of a Creature. For to be *good* by a *natural* Necessity requires an *infallible* Understanding, or a Mind that is infinitely *removed* from all Possibility of being deceived and mistaken; and this no *finite* Mind can be: But how should the Will be in all particulars necessarily determined to what is Right, so long as it is under

under the Conduct of a *fallible* Mind that hath a *natural* Possibility of misleading it? So that to be *naturally, necessarily, and essentially good*, seems to be an *incommunicable* Prerogative of the *Divine Nature*, according to that of our Saviour, *There is none good save one, and that is God*, Luke 18. 19. For since no Will can be *essentially good* but that which is guided by 'an *infallible* Mind, and no Mind can be *essentially infallible* but that which is *infinite* in Knowledge, it hence necessarily follows, that to be *free to Good and Evil* is as *natural* to *reasonable* Creatures, as it is to be *finite* in Knowledge and Understanding. 'Tis true the *greater* Light of Knowledge there is in the Mind, the *less* Freedom to *Evil* there must be in the Will, unless it hath some *antecedent* Biass and Inclination to *Evil*; and consequently the Angels being of far more *intelligent* Natures than we Men, must needs be naturally *less free to Evil*; but yet that even they are naturally *free* to it is evident, for that some of them have actually lapsed into Devils; and if they are so by their Natures, then much more are we by ours, who are so much their Inferiours in the *rational* World. For as we are *finite* Intelligences we must necessarily have some Degree of Freedom to *Evil* in us, but as we are of the *lowermost* Rank of Intelligences, we must naturally have *greater* Degrees of this Freedom in us than any *other* Order of *intelligent* Natures; And if this were all, yet this very Condition of our Natures renders us more *liable* to degenerate into an *evil* and *sinful* State, than any *other* kind of *reasonable* Creatures. If we were now in a State of *perfect* Innocence; yet of all *intelli-*

gent Creatures, we should have the greatest Reason to apprehend the Danger of our Fall; because being the *least intelligent* we have the *greatest* Freedom to *Evil*, and consequently are on that Account in the *greatest* danger of falling into it. By the very Condition of our Natures we are of all *rational* Creatures placed *nearest* to the Brinks of the *fatal* Precipice, and therefore have most Reason to apprehend the Danger of falling *headlong* into it. For doubtless among *innocent* Creatures, there are none so near the Danger of sinning as those whose Wills are *least* restrain'd from it, and therefore though we were now as *innocent* as the *blessed* Angels are, yet our Condition would be unspeakably more *unsafe*; because by how much we fall short of them in Knowledge and Understanding, by so much we should exceed them in our Freedom to *Evil*, and consequently be so much the more *liable* to it. But this alas is the *least* of our Danger; For

2ly. We are liable to fall into a *sinful* State, and from thence into *eternal* Misery, from the many Temptations to *Evil* among which we are placed. For this State of Being in which we now are, being intended by *God* for our Tryal and Probation, it was *requisite* in order thereunto that we should be placed among Difficulties, that we might have *sufficient* Opportunity to exercise our Skill and Courage in *Religion*; for unless we had some such Difficulties to encounter, there could no Proof or Tryal be made of our Virtue. Hence therefore hath *God* placed our *rational* Souls in *mortal* Bodies, which do naturally abound with *brutish* Appetites and Desires, and compassed us round with this  
World

World of *sensual* Goods and Evils, which continually importunes and excites them, that so we might have sufficient opportunity to exercise those *humane* Virtues which consist in the Dominion of our *rational* Faculties over these our *bodily* Appetites and Desires, that we might never want occasion to give the most *glorious* Proofs of our *Patience* and *Chastity*, *Temperance* and *Equanimity*, *Meekness* and *Sobriety*; all which are proper to us as Beings made up of *Soul* and *Body* whence all those *brutish* Appetites arise, in the good or bad Government whereof consists the Nature of *humane* Virtue and Vice. So that this *present* State of *humane* Life is intended by *God* for a Field of Combat between *Reason* and *Sense*, between the Law in our Minds, and the Law in our Members; and that the Victory of Reason might, through the Difficulty of it, be render'd more *glorious* and *remarkable*, he hath furnished its *Antagonist*, viz. the *bodily* Appetite with *various* Weapons, with the Temptations of a World of *sensitive* Goods and Evils to assault and oppose it, to try its Metal, and exercise both its *active* and *passive* Virtues; and upon the success of this Combat depends the *everlasting* Fate of the Soul. If *Sense* prevail, and lead her finally Captive into Vice and Wickedness, she is lost *for ever*; but if Reason get the Victory, and finally reduce the Desires and Appetites of *Sense* under the Dominion of Virtue, when this *mortal* Life ends She shall triumph *for ever*, and be translated hence into a free and *disintangled* State, where she shall be vexed and inticed no more with the Importunities of *sensual* Lusts and Affections, but to all *Eternity* enjoy



the Serenity and Pleasure of a pure *Intellectual* Being. This being therefore the *true* State of Affairs, it is *too too obvious* how *liable* the Soul is to miscarry when it is placed in a Body among so many *brutish* Passions and Appetites, and that Body is placed in a *tempting* World, among so many *sensitive* Goods and Evils that are continually importuning those Appetites to *mutiny* against Reason, and carry us away Captive into Folly and Wickedness. How much Reason have we to look about us, when we are placed in the midst of so many Dangers; and have such *numberless* Snares on every side ready to decoy and intangle us? But this is not all neither; For

3ly. We are *liable* also to fall into a *sinful* State, and from thence into *eternal* Misery, from the more *close* and *intimate* Access which these Temptations have to us, than the *contrary* Motives to Goodness. For the *great* Advantage which these Temptations to Vice have over the most *powerful* Motives to Virtue is this, that they are all of them *present* and *sensible*; for as for those *grand* Motives to Goodness that are drawn from the Consideration of our *future* State, they propose to our *Hopes* and *Fears*, those Master-Springs of our Motions, such *Goods* and *Evils* as are a *great* way off, and beyond the prospect of our *bodily* Senses, which makes the Land-skip of them appear exceeding *dim* and *faint* upon the Mind; their *Futurity*, which is one sort of Distance, causing them like Things afar off to look *confused* and *indistinct*, by reason of which they cannot affect us so *powerfully*, and draw such *strong* and *lasting* Draughts of themselves upon our minds: For Goods, like  
Magnets,

Magnets, have always the *strongest* Attractions when they are *nearest* ; but as for those *invisible* Goods of the *other* World, they are at such a Distance from us that they can hardly reach us who live upon the *remotest* Circumference of the Sphere of their Attraction. And as Distance lessens all Objects to the Eye, and renders them much *smaller* in Appearance than they are in Reality ; so the *remote* Futurity of those *eternal* Goods which the Motives of Virtue do propose, detracts from their *just* Magnitude, and makes them, tho' unspeakably *vast* in themselves, appear exceeding *small* and *inconsiderable* to our *short-sighted* Minds. And the same is to be said of those *future* Evils also, which they denounce against us ; and besides, being not only *remote*, but *invisible* too, they cannot strike upon our Senses, by which the most *vigorous* Impressions of Things are made upon our Minds ; whereas the Temptations of Vice are all *present* and *sensible*, and do so circle us round as soon as we look abroad into the World, that which way soever we turn our Eyes they are still before us thrusting themselves into our Minds, and with their *constant* Importunity stirring and working our Desires. So that whenever these *outward* Goods or Evils do assault us, we lie *bare* and *open* to them, and they continually press so close upon our Senses, that we are not able to avoid their Impressions : When any *outward* Good invites us to a sinful Action, it hath the *vast* Advantage of being *present* and *sensible* ; by Reason of which, it having a more *immediate* Access to our Minds doth many times prevail before we can Rally up a *sufficient* Strength of Considerations against it ; and when we set our selves to resist and struggle

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gle with it, the *best* of our Weapons is a Company of *thin* and *faint* Notions of Things afar off; Things that we never saw nor felt; which whilst we are recollecting, the Vice we are Tempted to, hath its Powers ready to seize upon the Will, which having oftentimes experienced the Pleasure it invites to, is the more easily *seduced* to a *fresh* Compliance. And whilst our Enemies are so *near* us, and our Helps and Succors so far off, we must needs acknowledge our Danger very *great* and *urgent*.

4ly. We are *liable* to fall into a *sinful* State, and from thence into *eternal* Misery, from the *great* Correspondence of these Temptations with the *corrupt* Inclinations of our Natures. For by Reason of the Nearness and Sensibleness of those *outward* worldly Goods by which we are continually tempted and solicited to Evil, they have the Advantage of preingaging our Affections to them before we arrive to the Use of our Reason; for in our *tender* years these are the only Goods that we can relish, they are these that do *feed*, *clothe*, and *furnish* us in hand with whatsoever our *natural* Appetites do gape for; that are the *sole* Entertainment of our *childish* Fancies, and the *only* Objects our yet *unfledg'd* Thoughts and Desires can reach at; and our Youth being thus intirely inured to them, by that time we are grown *up* to the Age of Reason and the Capacities of Virtue and Religion, we have generally contracted such an *excessive* Inclination towards them, and are so strongly bias'd with the Love of them, that whenever they beckon to us we are ready to follow them through all the *forbidden* Tracts that lead to

ever-

everlasting Ruin. For our Natures being thus vitiated, the Temptations *without* us have a strong Party *within* us, a Party of *traytorous* Inclinations which upon every Summons sollicit us to yield, and surrender up our Virtue and Innocence; and no sooner can any Temptation from *without* give the Alarm, but presently *our own* Lusts are up raising a Mutiny *within* us, and with the Heats of our *corrupted* Fancy do many times so disorder our Understanding that it cannot rally up its Considerations against them. For before ever our Understanding could be furnished with Considerations, our Hearts were prepossessed with such an *excessive* degree of *ambitious*, *covetous*, and *luxurious* Inclinations, that when afterwards the *Pleasures*, *Profits*, and *Honours without* begin to hold forth their *grateful* Lures to us, and to tempt us away to *Fraud* or *Treachery*, to *Vanity* or *Licentiousness*, those *depraved* Inclinations have gotten such Head *within* us, that they prove most commonly *too strong* for all our Consideration, and with their *impetuous* Current carry us away, and drive us *headlong* down towards *eternal* Ruin; and unless we put forth all the strength of our Reason and Resolution, and the Grace of *God* also come in to our Aid, it will be *impossible* for us to stem such a *furious* Tide when it is driven by the Wind of an *outward* Temptation. When therefore *our own* Inclinations do so vigorously conspire with the Temptations *without* to thrust us on into Sin and Perdition, how we can be *insensible* of the *eminent* danger we are in of Miscarrying for ever? But  
5ly. We are *liable* also to fall into a *sinful* State, and from thence into *Eternal* Misery, from the *un-*  
*wearied*



*wearied* Diligence and *great* Subtilty of the Devil to make Use of, and apply these Temptations to us. For that the Devil doth commonly, as an *assistant* Genius to the Corruption of our Natures, excite and provoke Men to Wickedness is very evident from *Scripture*; where he is said to *work in the Children of Disobedience*, Eph. 2. 2. *To fill the Heart of Ananias to lie to the Holy Ghost*, Acts 5. 3. *And to take away the Word out of Mens hearts, lest they should believe and be saved*, Luke 8. 12. All which Expressions do plainly imply that the Devil is a *constant* Agent in the Sins of Men. And being a *Spiritual* Agent, he must needs be supposed to have a *nearer* Access to the Soul than any *material* Cause whatsoever. For tho he be totally debarr'd from all kind of Intercourse with the *immediate* Operations of the *reasonable* Soul, and can no more look into the Thoughts than we can into the Bowels of the Earth; yet he can easily get into the Fancy which stands next to that *mysterious* Chamber that is open to no Eye but Gods, and make what use he pleases of the *infinite* Images and *Phantasms* that are in it, and dispose, and order, and distinguish them into the *Pictures* of what Objects he pleases, just as the Painter doth his *numerous* *Colours* that lie confusedly before him in their *several* Shells, and continue and repeat those Pictures and Representations as *long* and as *oft* as he pleases. And then considering what the *natural* Use of the Fancy is, both to the *Understanding* and *Will*, how it prompts the *one* with matter of Invention, and supplies it with Variety of Objects to work on, and draws forth and excites the *other* to chuse or reject those Objects it presents, according as they are

are pleasing or displeasing ; we must needs suppose that the Devil hath a *vast* Advantage of insinuating his *black* Suggestions into the Soul, by having such *free* Access into the Fancy. And accordingly he is said to *put it into the heart of Judas to betray Christ*, John 13. 2. But then he being not only a *spiritual*, but also an *intellectual* Agent, of a *vast* and *capacious* Understanding by Nature, and particularly improved in the *black* Art of tempting by a *long* Experience of its Wiles and Stratagems, having been a Tempter almost ever since he hath been an Angel ; he must needs be supposed to be wonderfully *expert* and *sagacious* in it ; that after having had *five Thousand* years experience of the Methods of seducing Souls to increase and perfect his *natural* Subtilty, he must by this be fully instructed when and how to apply himself to every Age and Constitution. For this hath been his *sole* Business wherein he hath been infinitely *intent* and *active* ever since he became a Devil, and if from a Man, then much more from a Devil of one Business. *Good Lord deliver me*, from a Devil that for *five Thousand Years* hath been continually making Experiments of Temptation, and drawing them into Rules to direct and order his *mischievous* Practice on the Souls of Men. But besides, as the Devil is of a *spiritual* and *intelligent* Nature, so he hath a *vast* Number of his *black* Angels continually roving about the World to seduce and captivate us into Sin and Ruin. And tho these *malignant* Spirits have no ligament of *natural* Love between them to tie and oblige them to *one another*, yet by that *perfect* Hatred which they all bear to *God* and *Men* they are united together in

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an *inviolable* League, and go hand in hand with *one another* in pursuance of their *desperate* Design to involve our *wretched* Souls in the same *eternal* Ruin with themselves, which renders their Force so much the more *formidable*. And when we have so many *spiritual, subtil, and Powerful* Adversaries combining against, and continually wandring *to and fro* like *roaring Lyons* to devour us, we cannot but apprehend our Danger exceeding *great*; especially considering the *infinite* Temptations from *without*, that this World affords the great Variety of *sensual* Goods and Evils which they have to object to our *carnalized* Minds. For these *mischievous* Spirits, having so *great* Insight into our Tempers, and so *great* a Choice of Objects to suggest to our Fancies, can never be at a Loss how they may nick us with a *convenient* Temptation; and that which gives their Temptations a *vast* Advantage over us is, that we know not how to distinguish them from the Motions of *our own* Hearts; For could we see the Devil at our Elbows, or hear him whispering at our Ears every time he insinuates his *wicked* Suggestions into our Minds, we should doubtless reject them with an unspeakable Horror; but because when they are convey'd into us, we know not how to distinguish them from the *natural* Births of *our own* Minds; therefore we do make no scruple to *hug and dandle* them in our Thoughts and entertain them with an *actual* Complacence. And when the Devil can convey his Poyson into us in such an *invisible* manner, without discovering his Devils Face; when he can thus prompt us behind the Curtain, and so disguise his Whispers that we can't discern them from the

*secret*

*secret Lustings of our own Hearts*; how can we be safe, without great Care and Watchfulness, from the Malice of such a formidable Enemy? But

6ly. We are also *liable* to fall into a *sinful State*, and from thence into *eternal Misery*, from the *plausible Pretences* we are furnished with to excuse and justify our Compliance with them. When by *our own Folly* and the Devil's Malice we are actually betrayed into any *wilful Sin*, a *speedy Repentance* would recover us immediately, and heal the Wound as soon as it is made; but instead of that we have a *thousand plausible Excuses* to palliate and skin it over? but alas! in the mean time it rots inwardly, and is festring apace into an *incurable Gangrene*. For when our Conscience begins to fly in our Faces, we have no *other Way*, but either presently to repent of, or to excuse and cloak our Wickedness; the *later* of which is usually pitch'd on as being both the most *easy*, and the most *agreeable* with our *corrupt Inclinations*. And indeed there are so many Coverts which Men have found out for their Lusts to shelter them from the Persecutions of their Consciences, that this Way there are no Men can be long to seek; for either they may blanch them over with an *innocent Name*, and call their Intemperances, *Good-fellowship*, their Knaveries, *ingenious Fetches*; and their Incontinences, *Tricks of Wit*; or else they may extenuate and mince them into *Peccadillo's*, and smooch over their *grossest* Rebellions with the softer name of *humane Failings* and *Infirmities*; or else they may furnish themselves with some Shew of Argument to vindicate their Vices and  
assert



assert them *lawful*, as some of late have done in the Case of *Fornication* and *Uncleaness*: or else they may set up for *Philosophical Sinners*, and quote Texts out of their Gospel, the *Leviathan*, against the *eternal Differences* of *Good* and *Evil*. But if their Consciences will not be put off with such *poor Pretences* as these, there are *Religious Pretences* enough in the World to protect and give Countenance to all their Impieties; and they may either fly to the *Romish Doctrins* of *Confession* and *Penance*, of *Venial Sins*, and of *probable Opinions*, with any one of which they may easily reconcile their Lusts and Consciences: Or if they chance to have an *Antipathy* to the name of *Roman Catholick*, they may furnish themselves with such Doctrins out of some of our *modern Euthusiasts*, as will be as *favourable* to their Lusts as they need, or wish, or desire; that will consecrate their *irregular Passions* into Signs of *Grace*, and dwindle their *grossest Crimes* into the *Sports* of God's People; that will exalt a *mechanick Train* of Fancies and Passions into a *sincere Conversion*, and improve an *Hysterical Fit* into a *spiritual Experience*. By these, and such like ways may Men easily excuse their Vices to their Consciences; and when they are furnished with so *many Expedients* whereby to inable themselves to sin on quietly, in how much Danger are they of falling *fast asleep* in the midst of their Guilts, and never waking again till they flame out about their Ears into *everlasting Burnings*? For whereas this Faculty of Conscience was implanted within us by the Author of our Natures, to be a *Guard* to our Innocence, and a *Scourge* to our Lusts, the Generality of Men have invented

ted so many Tricks to shift and evade it, that it is become almost totally *useless* to them. And when they have thus disabled their Consciences from defending them against the Importunities of their Lusts, in what *unspeakable* Danger must they be, not only of *falling* into, but *continuing* in them till they have utterly ruined and destroyed them?

7ly. And lastly, We are also *liable* to fall into a *sinful* State, and from thence into *eternal* Misery, from the *extream* Difficulty which this our Compliance with those Temptations brings us under, to reject and vanquish them for the future. For every *new* Compliance with Temptations to *Evil* foment and inrages our *evil* Inclinations, and when once these *evil* Inclinations are by our *customary* Compliances educated into *sinful* Habits, it will be *impossible* for us without a *mighty* Assistance of *divine* Grace to vanquish and subdue them. So that as upon the *former* Accounts we are in *extream* danger of falling into *sinful* Courses, upon this Account we are in no *less* Danger of continuing in them. For by complying with *this* Temptation, I shall very much disable my self from withstanding the *next*; and if I yield to *that* too, the *third* will find me much more *ready* and *tractable*, and so on, till at last the Temptation grows first *familiar*, and then *natural* to me, and then it will be *hard*, and then *harder*, and then almost *impossible* to reject or deny it. And when Things are reduced to this Issue that my Sin is *naturalized* to me, and grown into an inveterate Habit, *the Lord have mercy upon me!* for now I am in the *Suburbs* of *Hell*, but one

Remove from the State of the *Damned*, and am so far gone in a *confirmed* State of Impiety, that I have almost lost my Liberty of returning; and unless I am speedily rescued by some Miracle of Grace, it is *morally impossible* I should ever escape. Thus as we go on from *one* Degree of Wickedness to *another*, we do as it were break down the Bridge behind us, and do what in us lies to disappoint our selves of all Hopes of any *future* Retreat. For every Step *forwards* in our *sinful* Progress, renders our Return more *difficult*; and when once we have proceeded into a Custom and Habit of Sin, we shall find Repentance so *irksom* to us, and so much against the Grain of our Nature, that it is a thousand to one but that the Difficulty of it will utterly dishearten us from attempting it; and so rather than take so much Pains as we must necessarily do in swimming against the *impetuous* Stream of our Natures, we shall tamely yield to it, and suffer our selves to be born down by it into the *dead Sea* of *endless* Misery. When therefore there are so many Causes conspiring together to betray us into *sinful* Courses, and when there are so many Difficulties when once we are *in* to oppose and hinder our Retreat, what *eminent* Danger are we in of falling into, and persevering in Sin to our *everlasting* Ruin! And thus you see how extremely *liable* we are upon all these Accounts to be *lost for ever*, that is, to plunge our selves into all those *endless* Miseries which the Loss of our Souls implies.

What then remains but that being seriously affected with the Sense of our Danger, we presently awake out of our Security, and with the  
*deepest*

deepest Concern for our *immortal* Souls, cry out with St. Peter's Auditors, *Men and Brethren, what shall we do to be saved?* Verily when I reflect upon the *strange* Unconcernedness of Men about their *future* Condition, I am tempted to think either that they do not believe that they have an *immortal* Soul in them, or that if they do, they believe it is *impossible* it should *for ever* miscarry. For how is it *conceivable* that Men, who in *other* matters are so *solicitous* when their Interest is at Stake, and exposed to the *least* Hazard, should believe that they have Souls in Danger of perishing *for ever*, and yet take no more Care or Regard of them, but (like the *forgetful* Mother, who, when her House was on Fire, to save her Goods, forgot her Child) lay out all their thoughts upon the *little* Concerns of this *frail* and *mortal* Life, and in the mean time forget their *precious* Souls, and leave them perishing in the Flames of Perdition? O *stupid* Creature! what art thou made of that canst consider that thou hast an *immortal* Soul, surrounded with so many Dangers of being lost *for ever*, and yet be no more concerned for its Preservation? Methinks if thou hadst any Sense in thee, having a Prospect of such *endless* Miseries before thee, the *remotest* Possibility of falling into them should be enough to startle and awake thee; but when thou art so near the Brink of those Miseries, and hast so many Causes round about thee shoving thee forward, and thrusting thee *headlong* down into them, and yet be no more concerned at it, is such a Prodigy of *senseless* Stupidity, as Heaven and Earth may justly be astonished at. 'Tis true, if the Danger thou art in



were such as is *impossible* to be evaded, it would then be the *wisest* Course thou couldst take to concern thy self as *little* as may be about it ; but rather to live merrily whilst thou mayst, and not *antedate* thy Misery, by thinking of the *dismal* Futurity. But *God* be praised this is not our Case, though our Condition be *dangerous*, yet it is far from *desperate* ; for if we will use our *honest* Endeavour, and vigorously exert the Faculties of our Nature, we not only may, but shall escape. There are indeed a *great* many Causes of our Danger, a *great* many Enemies concurring to our Ruin, but none of these are able to effect it, unless we our selves joyn hands in the *fatal* Conspiracy : If we will be but *faithful* Friends to our selves, and true to our own *eternal* Interest, it will be beyond the power of all those Causes together to do us any *material* Injury. For *blessed* be the *good* *God* those that are for us, are far *greater* and *mightier* than those that are against us ; against us we have the *World*, the *Flesh*, and the *Devil*, the *weakest* of which is, I confess, a *dangerous* and *puissant* Enemy ; but for us we have *God* and *Angels*, and our *own* Reason assisted with the most *invincible* Motives ; with *vast* and *glorious* Promises, that stand beckoning to us with Crowns of Immortality in their Hands, to call us *off* from the Pursuit of our Lusts to the Practice of Virtue and Religion ; with *direful* Threatnings, that are continually Alarming and warning us of the *dreadful* Consequents of our Sins ; and sundry other such *mighty*, I had almost said *Almighty* Motives, as, if we would seriously attend to, would certainly render our Souls *impregnable* against all the Temptations

tions of Vice. And besides our Reason thus Armed and Accoutered, we have on our side the *Holy Angels of God*, who are always ready to prompt us to, and assist us in our Duty, and to *second* us in all our *spiritual* Combats against the Enemies of our Souls. And besides all these we have with us the *Almighty Spirit of God*, who upon our sincere Desires and *honest* Endeavours is engaged to aid us, and *co-operate* with us in working out our Salvation; whose Grace is abundantly *sufficient* for us, to strengthen us in our Weakness, to support us under our *greatest* Difficulties, and carry us on victoriously through the most *violent* Temptations. And being back't with such *mighty* Auxiliaries, how is it *possible* that we should miscarry, unless we are resolved to betray *our selves*, and give fire to the *fatal* Trains of our Enemies; and if we are so bent there is no Remedy for our Obstinacy, and it is *just* and *fit* we should be left to the *dismal* and *pitiless* Effect of *our own* Folly and Madness. For if when we see our selves in so much danger, and it is yet in our Power to escape if we please, we will notwithstanding *precipitate* our selves into Ruin; all the World must agree upon an *impartial* Inquisition for the Blood of our Souls, that we *murdered* our selves, that *God* is *just*, and that his hands are *clean* from any stain of our Blood, and that *our own* Ruin is wholly owing to our own *invincible* Obstinacy.

III. I proceed now to the *Third* Proposition,  
That our *renouncing of Christ, and his Religion*, will  
most certainly infer the loss of our Souls. For, as I  
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have shewed you, these Words are urged by our *Saviour* as a Motive to deter his Disciples from forsaking him, as is plain from *Ver. 24, 25.* which necessarily supposes that upon their forsaking him, this Loss would most certainly and inevitably follow. In the Prosecution therefore of this Argument I shall endeavour these *two* things.

1. To shew you what that forsaking of Christ is, which infers this Loss.

2. Upon what Accounts our thus forsaking him infers it.

1. What that forsaking of *Christ* is, which infers this Loss. To which I answer, there is a *Four-Fold Forsaking of Christ*, which the *Scripture* takes notice of as *capital* and *damnable* to the Souls of Men.

1. When we *forsake* him by a *total* Apostacy.

2ly. When we cowardly *renounce* the Profession of his Doctrine, or any Part of it, notwithstanding we still believe and are convinced of the Truth of it.

3. When by *obstinate* Heresy we either add to, or subtract from the Faith of *Christ*.

4ly. When by any *wilful* Course of Disobedience we do virtually *renounce* the Authority of his Laws.

1. We lose and forfeit our Souls, when we forsake Christ by a *total* Apostacy from him: When after we have been Baptized into his Name, and thereby have made a *visible* Profession of our believing his Doctrines, and obeying his Laws, we turn Runagadoes, and cast off our Belief of the *one*, and disown our Obligation to the *other*; we do most justly incur the Loss and Forfeiture of

of our Souls. For so *strong* and *cogent* is the Evidence of *Christianity*, that it is not to be supposed that any *professed Christian* can be either innocently or excusably seduced into a Disbelief of it; For *Religion* being a Matter of the *vastest* Moment and Concern, he is a Traytor to himself that either takes up his *Religion* without Examination, or that upon Examination refuses to be swayed by the *strongest* Reason; And I am sure it is *impossible* for any *Christian* to turn *Infidel* that is but so *honest* to himself as *first* to examine carefully the Reasons of his Faith, and then to resolve sincerely not to reject it till better Reasons appear to the contrary; But if either through their *wilful* Ignorance of the Evidence of *Christianity*, or *vicious* Prejudice against the Purity of it, they suffer themselves to be seduced into *Apostacy*, they are *false* Traytors to themselves, and as such are justly *liable* to all those *eternal* Damages they expose themselves to. And hence it is said of those that *draw-back*, that is, *apostatize* from *Christianity*, not only that God's Soul shall have *no pleasure* in them, but also that they *draw back to perdition*, Heb. 10. 38, 39. and 2 Pet. 2. 20. It is said of those *Apostates*, that *their latter end is worse than the beginning*; and that it had been better for them not to have known the way of *Righteousness*, than after they have known it, to turn from the holy Commandment; which implies that *Apostates* from *Christianity* do not only forfeit their Souls, but that without Repentance they will be *for ever* forfeited to the most *wretched* Condition, even to the *nethermost* Degree of Perdition.



2ly, We lose our Souls when notwithstanding we do still believe, and are convinced of the Truth of Christ's Doctrine, we do cowardly *renounce* the Profession of it, or any Part of it. For when once we have received the Faith of *Christ*, we are thereby obliged not to renounce the Profession of it whatsoever Hazard it may expose us to, our *blessed Lord* having assured us that if we *deny him before Men, he will also deny us before his Father which is in Heaven*, Mat. 10. 33. And St. Paul also having warned us, *that if we deny Christ, he will also deny us*, 2 Tim. 2. 12. That is, that he will reject and abandon us before God and Angels to *everlasting Misery and Damnation*; for so St. John assures us, *Rev. 2. 8. that the fearful and unbelieving, i. e. the faint-hearted Cowards that for fear of Persecution renounce the Profession of the Gospel, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone.* Not that in Times of Persecution we are always bound to make an *actual* Profession and Publication of our Faith, to run to the Tribunals of our Persecutors before we are sent for, and accuse our selves of those Doctrines for which we are Persecuted; but whenever we are *apprehended, accused, and examined* by them, either upon knowledge or suspicion, we are bound under the Penalty of *forfeiting* our Souls to *own and confess* our Faith, and not to deny any Doctrine or Article of it, whatsoever the Consequence may be. For in this Case to deny our Belief is not only a *wilful Lye*, which is in it self a *damnable Crime*, but an *Act of High-Treason* against our *Lord and Saviour*; for by renouncing any Doctrine which he hath revealed and committed

ted to us, we do not only betray his Trust, but blaspheme his Veracity ; to deny what we believe he hath revealed, being in effect to declare him a Cheat and an Impostor. And having thus incurred the Guilt of so *black* a Treason against our Saviour, and wilfully persisting in it, what can we expect the Consequence of it should be, but the eternal Loss and Perdition of our Souls?

3ly. We forsake *Christ* to the Loss and Forfeiture of our Souls, when by *obstinate* Heresy we add to, or subtract from that *Heavenly* Doctrine which he hath revealed to us. By *Heresy* I do not mean barely a *false* Opinion in our Religion whether it be of *greater* or *lesser* Moment ; for I doubt not but the same Error may be an *innocent* Mistake in *one* Man, and a *damnable* Heresy in *another* ; that in the *one* it may be the Effect of a *weak* Understanding, but in the *other*, of a *perverse* and *obstinate* Will ; and when the Understanding misleads the Will it is Weakness, but when the Will misleads the Understanding it is Wickedness. For *simple* Error is only a defect of Understanding, which in a *fallible* Creature is every whit as *inculpable* as Sickness in a *mortal one* ; but Heresy is a Fault of the Will, which is the only Subject of Vertue and Vice. When therefore by the *wicked* Prejudice of our *corrupt* Wills against the Purity of *Christianity*, our Understanding is betrayed into *loose* and *erroneous* Principles ; when we understand by our *vicious* Affections, and adapt our Opinions to the Interests of our Lusts ; when we believe for the sake of any *darling* Vice, and suffer *our own* *factious*, *covetous*, and *extravagant* Passions either to tempt us to profess those *erroneous* Opinions which  
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we do not believe, or to prejudice us into a Belief of them; then is our Error no longer to be attributed to the Weakness of our Understanding, but to the Wickedness of our Wills which Improves our Error into a *damnable* Heresy. For he would be a *wicked* Man, though he were not an Heretick, that harbours those *sinful* Lusts which betrayed him into Heresy; but by being an Heretick he is much more *wicked*, because now he is *wicked* under a Pretence of Religion, and cloaks his Impieties with the Garments of Righteousness. And what *greater* Prophaneness can any Man be guilty of, than to make his *Religion* a Baud to procure for his Lusts? So that if out of a *vicious* Propension of Will we obstinately persist in any *Religious* Errors, we are not only guilty of that *wicked* Propension which is of it self *sufficient* to ruin our Souls; but we are also *accountable* for *vitiating* our *Religion* with those *erroneous* Mixtures by which we have rendered it a Shelter and Protection to our Lust. And what the Consequence of this will be St. Jude will inform us, who speaking of *certain* Hereticks, who to gratifie their own *wicked* Inclinations, had *sophisticated* Christianity with sundry *black* and *poisonous* Principles, pronounces this *fearful* Doom on them; for *whom* is reserved the *blackness* of darkness for ever, ver. 13.

4<sup>thly</sup>. And lastly, We forsake *Christ* to the Loss and Forfeiture of our Souls, when by any *wilful* Course of Disobedience we do virtually renounce the Authority of his Laws. For whilst we continue in any Course of *wilful* Sin, we live in an *open* Rebellion to our *Saviour*, and do by our Actions declare that we will not have him to Reign over us.

us. And accordingly, Tit. 1. 16. the *abominable* and *disobedient* are said to *deny God in their works*, even while they profess to *know him*; and what the Fate of such will be, St. Paul hath forewarned us, Rom. 2. 8, 9. *But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness; indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish upon every Soul of Man that doth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile.* And the same *Apostle* speaking of these *obstinate Rebels*, who live and persist in an open Defiance to our Saviour's Authority, tells us that *they shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord*, 2. Thes. 1. 8, 9. But before we dismiss this Argument, it will be requisite more particularly to explain what those *wilful Courses of Sin* are by which they thus renounce him; all which may be reduced to these *three Heads*. *First*, We renounce the Authority of his Laws, when we sin against him out of *wilful Ignorance* of them. *Secondly*, When we sin on against him out of *wilful Inconsideration* of our Obligation to them. *Thirdly*, When we persist in our sin against Knowledge and Consideration.

1. We virtually renounce the Authority of our Saviour, when we sin on against him out of *wilful Ignorance* of his Laws. For the Laws of our Saviour, in which the great Lines of our Duty are described, are so *plain and legible*, that no Man can be long excusably *ignorant* of them. But if our Ignorance proceed either *first* from a *profane and profligate Mind* that is altogether regardless of God, and hath utterly worn off its *natural sense* of Religion, and so neither heeds it nor concerns it self about it, but is become quite *deaf* to all the Means



Means of Instruction ; or if it proceed, *Secondly*, from the *vicious* Prejudice of our Wills, and we Industriously set our selves for the sake of some *darling* Lust, to exclude from our Minds all the Means of Conviction ; and either studiously to avoid all thoughts of *Religion*, that we may sin on without disturbance, which is the way of those that are openly *Profane* and *Irreligious* ; or to use all *possible* Arts to wheedle our Understandings into the Belief of such Principles as are most *indulgent* to our Lusts, which is the way of *Hypocrites* and *false Pretenders* to *Religion* : If, I say, our Ignorance of Christ's Laws proceeds from either of these Causes, it will no more excuse our falling into sin, than the want of Light will a Man's falling into a Ditch that shuts his Eyes at Noon, and winks on purpose lest he should see, and escape the Danger that is before him. But then

2ly. We virtually renounce the Authority of our *Saviour*, when we sin on against him out of a *wilful* Inconsideration of our Obligations to obey him. For we being *reasonable* Creatures, are bound by the very Constitution of our Natures to act considerately, especially in matters of *Religion*, which are of the *greatest* Moment and Importance to us ; so that if we miscarry herein through *wilful* Inconsideration, we are every whit as *inexcusable* as if we had considerately betrayed our selves. Now *wilful* Inconsideration is either *actual* or *habitual* ; *Actual*, is either, *first* when notwithstanding we have been sufficiently warned by *precedent* Surprizes, we take no care for the *future* ; for though it cannot be expected we should always keep so *strict* a Guard upon our selves, as ne-  
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ver to be surprized by an Enemy; yet when we have been overtaken, there is all the Reason in the World we should take warning by it, and grow more *wary* and *vigilant* for the future; that we should awaken in our Minds such Considerations as are *necessary* to prevent our being surprized again, which if we do not, our *next* Surprise will be *inexcusable*. And if the sense of the *Lapse* which was perhaps but an *innocent* Error, or at most but a Sin of Infirmary, doth not make us more *careful* of our selves for the future; the *next* will be a *wilful* Fall: Or else in the second Place, this *actual* *wilful* Inconsideration is, when upon the *presenting* of any *beloved* Temptation we either quench the *good* Motions of our Minds, and refuse to consider the Evil and Danger of the Sin we are tempted to, lest we should be thereby deterred from committing it; or purposely contrive to baffle *our own* Consideration by opposing it either with some *ungrounded* Hope of Impunity, or some *fallacious* Promise of *future* Amendment; and if to make way for our sin, we do either of these ways wilfully drive all good thoughts from our Minds lest they should disturb and interrupt us in the Injoyment of it, our Inconsideration is to be resolved into the Wickedness of our Wills, and not into the Weakness and Infirmary of our Natures. And he that will not consider because he will sin, and afterwards extenuate his sin by his Inconsideration, urges *one* sin in excuse for another, and makes that which is his Fault, his Apology. Whensoever therefore we sin out of any *actual* and *wilful* Inconsideration, we sin wilfully, and consequently do thereby virtually renounce the Authority of  
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our *Saviour*; the *final* Event of which, without our Repentance, will be our *everlasting* Ruin and Perdition. But then besides this *actual* there is also an *habitual* Inconsideration, which is *wilful*; and that is, when by often stifling the Convictions of our Consciences we have seared them into a *deep* Insensibility of *Good* and *Evil*, so as that now we sin on without any Remorse or Reluctancy, and return to our Lusts with the same indifference as we do to our Beds or our Tables, without either considering what we are doing, or reflecting on what we have done; And this is so far from palliating our sin, that it is one of the *highest* Aggravations of it: For as it is no excuse that we sin out of an *evil* Habit which we voluntarily contracted by *frequent* Acts of sin, so neither will it at all excuse us that we sin out of an *habitual* Inconsideration which we *wilfully* contracted by often refusing to consider. But as *vicious* Habits have a *proper* Evil and Guiltiness in them *distinct* from those *vicious* Acts that produced them; so *habitual* Inconsideration hath in it a *peculiar* Venom of its own beyond what was in those *actual* Inconsiderations whereby it was acquired. And accordingly it is described in the *Scripture* as the *worst*, the most *desperate* and *incurable* state of a Sinner: It is called a *reprobate-Mind*, Rom. 1. 28, 29. a *seared Conscience*, 1 Tim. 4. 2. a *hard and unrelenting heart that treasureth up wrath against the day of wrath*, Rom. 2. 5. So that if we go on in sin without considering, with a Mind habitually *regardless* and *insensible*, we are *hardned* and *inveterate* Rebels, that have not only renounced the Authority of our *Saviour*, but have also forfeited our Selves,

Selves, and that almost irreparably against all his Methods of conquering and subduing us. But then

3ly. And Lastly, We virtually renounce the Authority of our *Saviour*, when we persist in our sin against *Knowledge* and *Consideration*. For to sin on obstinately against *Knowledge* and *Consideration*, argues an *invincible* Malice of Will; for tho' the Condition of the *ignorant* and *inconsiderate* Sinner be very *sad* and *deplorable*, yet there is much more Hope of him because he hath never yet had the Force and Efficacy of *Knowledge* and *Consideration*, which perhaps, if ever he be brought to experience, may prove a *successful* Means of his Cure and Reformation. But the *knowing* and *considerate* Sinner hath tryed and conquered the Remedy, hath experimented the only means of his Cure, and yet it grows *worse* and *worse* under the Application; he knows what his sin is, and considers the Consequence of it, and yet sins on; which argues a *desperate* Resolution of Will in him thus to run himself upon a *foreseen* Ruin, and leap into *Hell* with his Eyes open. And what Hope is there of dissuading *him* from his sin, that knows and considers the Arguments against it, and every day breaks through them all at the Call of every *sinful* Temptation? And as his Condition is most *desperate*, so his Soul is most *guilty* and *criminal*; for every Act of his sin is an *open* Defiance to the Authority of God and his *Saviour*; his Rebellion is *barefac'd*, and hath no manner of Pretence wherein to mask or disguise it self; and he knows and owns himself to be in a Rebellion, and yet perseveres in it, which extreamly aggravates and inhanfes the Guilt of



of it. For the *Sinfulness* and *Immorality* of Actions is to be measured by the Degrees of Will that are in them, and the Degrees of Will in them are *more* or *less* proportionably, as the Nature and Evil of them is *more* or *less* known and considered. Hence is that of St. James 4. 17. *To him that knoweth to do good, and doth it not, to him it is sin.* Had he not known the Nature of his Action, the Weakness of his Understanding would have excused the Error of his Will, and render'd it *pardonable* at least, if not altogether *innocent*: But when his Understanding hath discharged its Office, and shewed him the Evil that he ought to avoid, *that* hath fairly acquitted its self, and can stand no longer *chargable* for his Miscarriages: So that now the Man chooses his own Peril, and if he still choose what he ought to avoid, his Understanding is *clear*, and his Will alone is *Culpable*. And when our Rebellion against our *Saviour* is not only *wilful*, but the *wilfulness* of it is so extreamly aggravated by our Knowledge and Consideration, what the Consequence of it will be that *fearful* Passage will assure us, Luke 12. 47. *The Servant that knoweth his Masters will and doth it not, shall be beaten with many Stripes.* And thus I have endeavoured to represent to you what that Forsaking of Christ is, which exposes us to the Hazard of losing our Souls.

II. I proceed in the *next* Place to shew you upon what Accounts it is that our *forsaking of Christ* infers this *fearful* Loss; of which, I shall Briefly give you this *four-fold* Account.

1. Our thus *forsaking of Christ* infers the Loss of our Souls, as it is a most *inexcusable* Contempt of the *greatest* Mercy.

2ly. As

2<sup>ly</sup>. As it renders us the most *unfitting* Objects of Mercy for the future.

3<sup>ly</sup>. As it is an *open* Violation of the *fixed* and *stated* Condition of Mercy.

4<sup>ly</sup>. As it is an *utter* Rejection of our *last* Remedy.

1. Our forsaking of Christ by any of the *afornamed* Instances infers the *everlasting* Loss of our Souls, as it is a most *inexcusable* Contempt of the *greatest* Mercy. For when the *Son* of God came down from *Heaven*, he brought from thence with him the *largest* Offers of Mercy that *Heaven* it self could make to a *sinful* World; he did not only bring down with him a Grant of *universal* Pardon and Indemnity under the *Broad-Seal* of *Heaven* for every Sinner that would lay down his Arms, and return to his Allegiance, together with the most *endearing* Invitations of the *God* of *Heaven*, to *woo* and *win* us to accept it; but he also brought along with him all that an *everlasting* Heaven means, Crowns of *Immortal* Glory and Pleasure to encourage us to, and reward our Acceptance of them. And what greater Mercy could the *God* of *Heaven* have expressed to us, than to send down his *blessed* Son, not only to tender to us an Indemnity, but also to invite us to accept it with a Promise of *Heaven*? So that if now we reject him, now he is come to us with such *vast* and *endearing* Proposals, what an *intolerable* slight will it be to the tender Mercies of *God*? When we shall declare by our Actions that we will not exchange the sordid Pleasures of our Lust for the Pardon of *Heaven*, for the Favour of *God*, and for all the Hopes of a *glorious* Immortality? How can we expect any *far-*

ther Relief from God's Mercy, after we have put such an *intolerable* Affront upon it by preferring such an *unworthy* Rival before it? When *God* hath laid his Pardon, his Love, and his *Heaven* in our Way, to stop us in our *sinful* Courses, what a *barbarous* Indignity will it be to trample upon them all, and run over them into Hell? With what Face can we hope for any *farther* kindness from *Heaven*, after we have treated its Kindness with so much Rudeness and Contempt? Certainly for *sinful* Men to reject and run away from their *Saviour*, when he comes to them with so much Kindness, when he courts them with such *astonishing* Expressions of Mercy, is a Provocation *sufficient* to incense an *infinite* Goodness, and turn the tenderest Mercy into an *implacable* Fury. And when *infinite* Love is so infinitely provoked, what less Expiation can it claim and exact, than the *everlasting* Ruin and Perdition of our Souls?

2ly. Our *Forsaking of Christ* infers the *everlasting* Loss of our Souls, as it renders us the most *incapable* Objects of Mercy for the future. For when we are arrived to that Height of Wickedness as finally to reject *Christ*, and the Mercies of his *Gospel*, there is no farther Mercy that we are *capable* of; if after this God should be so *kind* and *indulgent* as to pardon us, alas! what would it signify? for we should still be *wretched* and *miserable* in Despair of his Pardon; and that *wicked* Temper of Mind which made us reject our *Saviour*, would be an *everlasting* Hell to us though it should indemnify us. What will a Pardon avail a Man that is dying of the *Stone* or *Strangury*? He can but die if he be not pardoned, and die he must though he be.  
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And as little Advantage it would be to a *wicked* Soul to be pardoned and absolved by *God*, while she hath a Disease within her that preys upon her Vitals, and hastens her to a *certain* Ruin. She could have been but *miserable* in the *future* Life if she had not been pardoned, and *miserable* she must be if she continues *wicked*, whether she be pardoned or no; there being an *everlasting* Hell in the very Nature of Wickedness, which no *outward* Act of Pardon can quench or extinguish. Nay, if after our rejecting *Christ*, and the Mercies of the *Gospel*, God should not only pardon, but admit us into *Heaven*, and indulge us the *free* Enjoyment of all its Pleasures and Felicities; yet that *vicious* Temper of Mind which finally *seduced* us from our *Saviour*, would render us for ever *incapable* of relishing the Joys of it. Those Rivers of *Heavenly* Pleasure would never agree with the *hellish* Temper of our Minds, which, like a *feverish* Tongue, would utterly disgust their *delicious* Streams by Reason of its own *overflowing* Gall. So that after we have finally rejected our *Saviour*, we are neither *capable* of being indemnified from *Hell*, nor of enjoying *Heaven*; and having cast our selves beyond the Reach of all Mercy, into a State wherein we can neither begin to be *happy*, nor cease to be *miserable*, our Case is *desperate*, and there is no Remedy but our Souls must be lost and undone *for ever*.

3ly. Our forsaking of *Christ* infers the *everlasting* Loss of our Souls, as it is an *open* Violation of the *fixed* and *stated* Condition of Mercy. The *fixed* and *immoveable* Condition of the Mercy of the *Gospel* is, that we should constantly adhere to our



*Saviour* by a true Faith and a sincere Obedience, and that whenever we fall off from him either into Infidelity, or Heresy, or Disobedience, we should remember from whence we are fallen, and return again to him by a deep and serious Repentance. And indeed this Condition is so low and condescending, that it was impossible for the wise God and Governor of the World, to propose his Mercy to us at a lower or easier Rate; and if God should have asked our Consent upon what Conditions he should propose to us the Mercies of his Gospel, this would have been the utmost Favour that we could in Modesty have craved of him, that he would be so gracious as to accept our unfeigned Faith and sincere Obedience; and that whenever we fall off either from the one or the other, he would admit us to Repentance, and receive us again upon our Return and Amendment. And should he have proposed his Mercy to us upon lower Terms, he must of Necessity have let go the Reins of his Government, and given us a free Toleration for all manner of Wickedness. Had the Condition of his Mercy been but one step lower than Repentance, it had totally dissolved the Obligation of his Laws, and reduced the humane World into a perfect Anarchy. For should he have prostituted his Mercy to impenitent Sinners, he must have made it a Refuge for obstinate Rebels to fly to, and shelter themselves from the Reach of his Authority; and how inconsistent would this have been with the Wisdom of his Government? This therefore being the lowest Condition upon which the wise and holy God can propose his Mercy to us, there is no Ground to hope that after we have rejected this, and are finally

finally fallen off from it, he will make any new Proposal to us. For he hath yielded as much already to the Weakness and Inconstancy of our Natures, as he could possibly do with safety to his Government; and if this will not suffice, we may depend upon it that he will rather consent to sacrifice our Souls to his *righteous* Vengeance, than his *own* Authority to our *obstinate* Wills. So that when once we have finally rejected our *Saviour*, and shaken hands for ever with Faith and Obedience, and Repentance too, we are quite beyond the Reach of any *wise* Mercy; and then how *deplorable* must our Condition be, when Things are reduced to this *desperate* Issue, That God must either consent to be foolishly *merciful* to us, or to abandon our Souls to *everlasting* Perdition?

4ly. And lastly, Our *forsaking of Christ* infers the *everlasting* Loss of our Souls, as it is an utter Rejection of our *last* Remedy. For the *last* Remedy which God hath prepared for Mankind to heal the Malignity of their Natures, and recover them from *eternal* Misery, is the *meritorious* Death and Sacrifice of his *Blessed Son*, who voluntarily undertaking to be the *Attorney-General*, and *Common Representative* of *sinful* Men, suffered Death in our stead as a *vicarious* Mult and Punishment for our Sins; upon which the most *merciful* Father hath granted to all *believing* and *truly penitent* Sinners, a *general* Indemnity from *eternal* Punishments, to which they were bound over by their Sins and Rebellions; by virtue of which Grant as soon as we believe in *Christ*, and do thereupon sincerely Repent of our Sins, we are totally absolved from those *everlasting* Punishments whereunto they have

exposed and obliged us. And this Sacrifice of *Christ* being the last Remedy which *God* hath provided for our *Guilt*, and the Grant of Pardon *God* hath made in Consideration of it, being confined to *believing* and *penitent* Sinners, it hence necessarily follows, that they who finally persist in *Unbelief* or *Impenitency*, do thereby *for ever* cut themselves off from all Interest in that Sacrifice; and from all Title to that Pardon that is granted upon it, and consequently leave themselves *for ever* destitute of all Hope of Pardon and Indemnity for the future. So that by renouncing *Christ* we do renounce his Sacrifice, which is the *last* and *only* Remedy we have to depend upon. Hence *Heb.* 10. 26. we are told, that *if we sin wilfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin*; that is, after we have been Baptized, and Initiated into *Christianity*, we relapse into Infidelity or *wilful* Disobedience, we do thereby forfeit our Interest in *Christ's* Sacrifice; and when we have once rejected our Interest in that, there remains no other Sacrifice for Sin, *i. e.* no other Sacrifice upon which *God* will Pardon and Indemnify us. So that now all that remains to us, is that which follows in the next Verse, *viz.* *A certain fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation, which shall devour the Adversaries.* For when we have finally baffled our *last* and *utmost* Remedy, the Condition of our Souls must needs be *desperate* and *incurable*. When by our *obstinate* *Unbelief* or *final* *Impenitence* we have *out-sinned* the Virtue of our Saviour's Sacrifice, we are out of the Reach and Compass of *God's* Pardon, and so consequently are sunk beyond all Hopes

Hopes of Recovery, into *endless* and *irreversible* Damnation. For now that *precious* Blood which, if we had believed and repented, would have spoke *better* things for us than the Blood of *Abel*, will rise in Judgment against us, and, like the Blood of those Souls that are under the Altar, will Charge and Impeach, and be continually imprecating the Vengeance of *Heaven* upon us. And when that which was prepared for the *last* and *utmost* Remedy of our Souls shall be converted into their Bane, and that which was intended for their Advocate shall become their Accuser; when that *vocal* Blood and those *speaking* Wounds which pleaded for, shall plead against, and cry out instantly for Judgment upon them; what can they henceforth expect but *everlasting* Ruin and Destruction?

What then remains, that since our *forsaking* of *Christ* will so infallibly infer the Ruin of our Souls, we all return to, and cleave *fast* to our *Saviour* in our Belief and Obedience: That we, who are fallen *off* from him into a Course of *wilful* Sin and Disobedience, immediately return again by a *deep* and *serious* Repentance. For the Way in which we are walking leads directly to Destruction; every Step of it is a Descent into Hell, and next to the *lowermost* is the *bottomless* Pit, and for all we know, the very *last* Step we took brought us to the Brinks of the flaming Abyfs; and if it did, one Step further will set us beyond all Hope of Recovery. For in our *sinful* Progress we are wading forwards in a *shelving* Pool, which the farther we go, the *deeper* it is, and so *deeper* and *deeper* till we come to the Bottom of it; so that at every



Step we are in Danger of going beyond our Depth, and plunging our selves into an *irrecoverable* Ruin; for we know not how soon we may be snatched away in our Iniquities; and if it should ~~so~~ happen, that after we have sinned *this* Moment, we should die the next, this will determine our *everlasting* Fate, and sink us into *eternal* Misery.

Wherefore as we tender the safety of our *precious* Souls, let us speedily forsake this *dangerous* Road in which Perdition *may-lays*, and *Hell* gapes to devour us every step we go; and return unto our Lord in whom our safety lyes. As yet the Opportunity of Salvation is in our Hands, but before to morrow Morning it may slip away from between our Fingers, and vanish *for ever*, and we that are *this* day wallowing in our Sins, may before the *next* be roaring in *Hell*. So that while we defer and put *off* our Repentance from day to day, we do as it were cast Lots for our Souls, and venture our *everlasting* Hopes upon a Contingency, that is not in our Power to dispose of. As yet the Gate of Mercy is open to us, and our *blessed* Lord stands ready with his Arms *out-stretched* to welcome and receive us; but for all we know if we enter not presently, the Gate may be shut within a *few* Moments, and then though we knock and cry till our hearts ake, *Lord, Lord open to us*, we shall receive no *other* Answer, but *Depart from me I know you not*. O Good God, how are we besotted then, that rather than begin our Repentance *to day* we will wilfully run the Hazard of being eternally *miserable* before to morrow Morning! For if this should be the Evening of our day of Tryal,

Tryal, as for all we know it may, our *Life* and *Eternity* depends upon what we are now doing; and therefore one would think it should highly concern us wisely to manage this last stake, the *winning* or *losing* whereof may prove our *making* or *undoing*. In pity therefore to our *perishing* Souls let us return to our *Saviour*, before it be too late, before our *Feet stumble on the dark Mountains*, and we fall down into *everlasting* Darkness. And being returned and re-united to him, let us have a Care we do not revolt again; for if we draw back we cancel our Repentance, and forfeit all its *blest* Fruits and Benefits; and unless we stedfastly persevere and hold out to the end, all the Pains we have taken in our Christian Course will be *for ever* lost, and the Remembrance of it will only administer to our *future* Misery. For how will it vex us in the *other* World to consider the Labour it cost us to take *Heaven* by Storm? How vigorously we strove to mount the *Scaling Ladder*, through how many Difficulties we had forced our way to that height of Vertue and Religion we were arrived to, and then when we are got as it were to the *topmost* Rounds, and had laid our Hands upon the Battlements of *Heaven*, just ready to leap in and take possession of all its Joys; how basely we let go our Hold, and so tumbled down from that *stupendous* height into the *bottomless* Abyss of *endless* Misery? Doubtless this Consideration must necessarily sting our *woful* Souls hereafter, and *for ever* inrage them against themselves. Wherefore as we value the Safety of our *precious* Souls, let us, who by our *wilful* Rebellions have gone astray, return, and constantly ad-  
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here to our *blessed Saviour*. Alas, where can we be *happier* than in his Service, who imposeth nothing on us but what contributes to our Welfare? Where can we be *safer* than in his Arms, and under his Protection, who hath the Command and Disposal of all Events, and to whom all Power is given in *Heaven* and Earth? Where can we be placed more to *our own* Advantage than under his Guidance and Authority, who never permits any to serve him for nought, but hath engaged himself to recompence our Labour with a Crown of Glory that fades not away? And is it not *strange* that after so many *advantagious* Invitations, we should need to be *scared* to our Duty? that after our *blessed Master* hath enjoyed us such a *reasonable, gentle, and infinitely beneficial* Service, he should be forced to terrify us into it with the Flames of Hell?

IV. I proceed now to the *Fourth* Proposition, *That when the Soul is lost, 'tis lost irrecoverably*; where the Greek word *ἀντάλλαγμα*, which we render *Exchange*, is used in the same sense with *ἰξίλασμα*, which signifies a Price of Redemption, denoting that when once a Man hath sold his Soul to Perdition, it is *unredeemable*, and that no Price will be accepted for its Ransom and Deliverance; when a Man's Soul is in *Hell* under the wretched Bondage of a *damned* Spirit, how little soever he regards it now, he would give all the World, if it were in his power, to be released again; but if he had a *thousand* Worlds it will not do, his Bondage being such as will admit no Ransom. For these Words of our *Saviour* seem to have

have been a *common Proverb* of the Age he lived in, and that derived from those words of the Devil in *Job*, *All that a Man hath, will he give for his Life*; that is, when a Man is dying, he would willingly part with all to redeem his Life, but all will not do. Which *Proverb* our *Saviour* adapts to his *own Argument*, in which he proceeds from *temporal* to *eternal* Life: If a Man would give so much for his *temporal* Life, what would he not give for his *eternal* one? But as our *temporal* Life is not to be redeemed, so neither is our *eternal* one when once it is lost; for when once our Soul is lost or abandoned to the State of the Damned, it is lost for ever, and there is no ἀντάλλαγμα, or Ransom that will be accepted of by God for its Redemption thence. In the Prosecution of which Argument I shall endeavour these two things.

1. To shew you that if God be so determined he may, without any Injury either to his Justice or Goodness, detain lost Souls in the Bondage of Hell for ever, and absolutely refuse to accept any Ransom for them.

2. That he is actually determined so to do.

1. That if God be so determined, he may without any Injury either to his Justice or Goodness, detain lost Souls in the Bondage of Hell for ever, without accepting any Ransom for them. And this I doubt not will plainly appear upon the due Consideration of these following Propositions.

1<sup>st</sup>. That God being the *Sovereign* Being of the World, hath an *unalienable* Right to impose Laws upon all other Beings.

2<sup>ly</sup>. That



2dly. That having this Right, he may justly inforce those Laws with whatsoever Penalties he sees necessary or convenient.

3dly. That when those Laws he imposes are for the good of his Subjects, it is not only Justice but Goodness in him to inforce them with the severest Penalty.

4thly. That the Penalty of eternal Bondage under Misery, is the severest and most effectual Way to inforce those beneficial Laws, and oblige us to the Observance of them.

5thly. That if God think good to inforce his Laws with this Penalty, he hath as much Right to exact it when we disobey, as he had to threaten and impose it.

6thly. That his actual exacting of it can no more impeach his Goodness, than his threatening and denouncing it.

1. That God being the Sovereign Being of the World, hath an unalienable Right to impose Laws upon all other Beings. For he being the greatest and most powerful Being, can himself be subject to no other Law but only that of his own Nature; and his Power being infinite and unconfined as well as his Wisdom, Justice, and Goodness, doth sufficiently warrant him to do whatsoever is consistent with them. For to be sure a Being of infinite Power and Greatness, can have no Superiour, but must be necessarily exalted above all other Authorities by this incommunicable Prerogative of his Nature; and being raised above all Authorities, he must have Authority above all, and his essential Dominion having no other Law to bound it, but only that of his own Nature, he must necessarily have

a Right to command whatsoever is *consistent* with his *Wisdom, Justice, and Goodness*. His *Will* therefore being by the *infinite* Pre-eminence of his Power and Greatness *supreme*, all other Wills are obliged to bow before, and prostrate themselves to its *Sovereign* Authority; and there is no Law whatsoever but he may justly impose upon them, provided it be not *repugnant* to that *supreme* Law that is founded in his *own* Nature. This therefore being premised, that God hath a Right as he is the *Sovereign* Being to give Laws to all other Beings; it hence follows,

2dly. That he may justly inforce those Laws with whatsoever Penalties he sees *necessary* or *convenient*. For Laws without Penalties are rather Petitions than Commands; and unless they carry force enough with them to *over-aw* the Subject, and make themselves obeyed, they want the *formal* Sanction and Obligation of a Law. To have a Power therefore of imposing Penalties must necessarily be *inseparable* from the Power of making Laws, because they are the Penalties that make the Laws to oblige, that give them Power to command, and inforce them with an *awful* Authority. And as the Power of giving Laws supposes the Power of imposing Penalties, so it supposes a Power of imposing such Penalties as may be *sufficient* to incline and aw the Subject into Obedience, against all Reasons to the contrary. For unless the Penalty be *great* enough to *outweigh* all other Considerations, the Law which it inforces will be extremely *defective* in Point of Obligation, and leave the Subject as much reason to disobey as to obey. God therefore being by his own *natural*  
Right

Right the *Supreme* Lawgiver of the World, must be supposed to have an *equal* Right of inforcing his Laws with such Penalties as in his own *infinite* Wisdom he shall think *necessary* to oblige his Creatures to obey him ; and there is no Penalty can be too *rigorous* or *severe* which is *necessary* to inable his Laws to oblige and command us. Wherefore according as he sees his Subjects *more* or *less* tempted, or inclined to disobey him, so will he need *greater* or *less* Penalties to oblige us to Obedience ; and therefore foreseeing what a *strong* Propensity to Evil there would be in our Nature, and with what *importunate* Temptations this would be excited and wrought upon, he could not but foresee that the *severest* Penalties would be necessary to back and inforce his Laws, and being *necessary* for that end, he must needs have a Right to impose them, how *severe* soever they might be ; nor is this severity less *good* than it is *just* ; considering,

3dly. That when those Laws he imposes are for the *good* of his Subjects, it is not only an Act of Justice in him to impose them with the *severest* Penalties, but of Goodness. And this is really the Case as to those Laws which *God* hath imposed upon us ; for the Matter of them all is something tending to our good, something or other that is *perfective* of our Natures, and conducive to our Happiness ; and being so, the *greater* the Penalty is which they are backt and inforced with, the *greater* Demonstration it is of God's Care and Zeal for our Happiness. For the End of Penalty is to oblige us to Obedience ; and when all Obedience is for our *good*, the more strictly he obliges

us to it, the more he befriends us. When a *distra*cted Man is endeavouring to mischief and destroy himself, it is Kindness to bind him though it be with Chains of Iron. When therefore God found us so *prone* to injure our selves by *wicked* and *mischievous* Actions, it was Mercy to bind our Hands with his Threatnings of Punishment; and the *stronger* his Bands are, the more they express his Kindness; because the more they oblige us to be *kind* to *our selves*, and *true* to *our own* Interest. And certainly for God to lay us under the *strongest* Obligations to be *happy*, is so far from being a Blemish to his Goodness, that it is a most *glorious* Expression of it; but if we will be so *obstinate* as to run into the mouth of those Threatnings which he hath levelled against us to scare us into Happiness, it is *just* with him to discharge them upon us, and make us feel the Effects of our Folly and Madness. Since therefore the Reason of the Penalty wherewith God hath enforced his Laws, is to oblige us to be *happy*; and since the *greater* it is, the more force it must have to oblige us, it hence necessarily follows, that though it be not only a *great*, but an *eternal* one; yet it is not at all *inconsistent* with his Goodness; especially if we consider,

4thly. That the Penalty of *eternal* Misery, as it is the *severest*, so it is the most *effectual* to enforce those *beneficial* Laws which God hath imposed on us, and to oblige us to the Observance of them. For to deter us from Sin, who are so vehemently prone to it, it was very requisite that the Penalty denounced against it, should not only be *great* as to the Degree, but endless also as to the

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Duration of it; that so it might cut us off from all pretence of Presumption, and leave us no ground of Incouragement to be *wicked*. For we are exceeding apt to slight and undervalue those *Evils* which are proposed to deter us from the *Goods* which we vehemently desire, especially when these *Goods* are *present* and *sensible*, and those *Evils* *future* and *invisible*. For thus we conclude, the *Good* that is before us we may enjoy a great while; and, which is very considerable, we may presently enter upon the Possession of it; but as for the *Evil* that is *consequent* to it, it may be a long while before it befalls us; and when it doth, there is this Comfort, that it will at *last* have an end; and therefore let what will follow, let us ever seize the *present Good*, and make the *best* use we can of it; and as for the *future Evil*, whenever it happens, the Prospect of its End, though it be never so *remote*, will enable us to bear it more cheerfully. For *ten Years present* Pleasure vehemently desired, will far more effectually persuade us, than a *future* Misery of *double* the Duration; and therefore if the *future* Penalty denounced against our Sin were *finite* and *temporary*, it would not be *sufficient* to ballance those *present* Pleasures with which we are continually importuned and solicited; for the Penalty being proposed to deter us from Pleasures which we dearly love, we are upon that account inclined to make as *light* of it as may be, and to flatter our selves with the *softest* and *easiest* Representations of it; so that to be sure if there were any one *comfortable* Circumstance in it, our Thoughts would presently insist upon that, and urge it as a Reason why we should  
not

not be afraid of it. So that if the Penalty of our Sin had in it but the Circumstance of being *finite*, to be sure when ever it controuled our *vicious* Desires, we should still make this a Pretence to despise it; *Well, let it be never so terrible, it will have an end.* Wherefore to inable it to terrify us effectually, it was requisite that it should not only be *great*, but *endless*; that it being stripped of all *tolerable* Circumstances, we might be able to find nothing in it to qualify the Terror of it. But now it being not only *great* but *eternal*, the Threat of it, which, like a Cloud, hangs *lowering* over us, hath no *bright side* to divert our Thoughts from the Blackness and Horror of it; so that whenever we think of it, and weigh it in the Ballance with our Sins, we must resolve to forsake them, or chuse to be *desperate*. Since therefore an *eternal* Penalty was so necessary to inforce God's Law; and since his Law is for our *good*, it is plain that his so inforcing it can blemish neither his Justice nor Goodness. Wherefore though we should smart *for ever* for our Disobedience hereafter, we can have no *just* Reason to complain of God; especially considering,

5thly. That if God shall think *good* to inforce his Law with such an *eternal* Penalty, he must be supposed to have as much Right to exact it upon our Disobedience, as he had to threaten and impose it. For as *Supremacy* over all other Beings gives a Right to make Laws, and inforce them with Threatnings of Punishment; so when he hath actually imposed Laws upon us, our Disobedience to them gives a Right to inflict on us the Punishments which he threatned when he imposed them. For

in all *legal* Punishments the Right of Threatning them is founded on the Power of the *Sovereign*; but the Right of executing them in the Disobedience of the *Subject*; and if the Penalty be such, as that upon the Subjects Disobedience the *Sovereign* cannot justly execute it, it was *unjust* for him to threaten it; for to threaten legally, is to claim a Right to punish upon Condition the Law be broken and violated; and that *Sovereign* who upon Condition of the Subjects Disobedience, claims a Right to *more* Punishment than he can justly exact of him when he disobeys, pretends to *more* Right than he really hath, and so by consequence his Claim is *unrighteous*. If therefore by the Threat of his Law *God* may justly claim a Right to punish us *for ever* if we disobey, then doubtless when we have actually disobeyed, he may as justly exact it, and doth no more exceed his Right when he inflicts what he threatned, than he did when he threatned to inflict it. If he had Right to say, *I will punish you for ever upon Condition you transgress my Laws*, then upon our performing that Condition he must necessarily have Right to do as he said. So that our transgressing his Law being a *sufficient* Condition for him to found a *rightful* Claim to punish us *eternally*, by our doing this Condition we justly forfeit our selves to *eternal* Punishment, and by *our own* Act and Deed voluntarily resign up our *precious* Souls to the *just* lash of an *everlasting* Vengeance; which as the *Justice* of *God* is no way obliged to suspend, so neither is his *Goodness*, which now is our only Reserve; considering.

6thly. And

6thly. And lastly, That God's exacting this eternal Penalty of us can no more impeach his *Goodness* than his threatening and denouncing it. That it is highly *consistent* with his *Goodness* to threaten it, I have already proved; but if it were not also *consistent* therewith to inflict it, to be sure his own *Wisdom* would never admit him to threaten it. For to what end should he threaten to act contrary to the *Goodness* of his Nature? Either he must design to make us believe that he intends to act, or not; if the *first*, he must thereby design to abuse, and misrepresent himself in the Opinion of his Creatures, to blemish the Reputation, and expose the Honour of his own *infinite Goodness*. But if he did not design to make us believe it, to what end should he threaten it, since unless we believe it, it can no more affect us than the firing of a *Gun* that is charged with nothing but Powder, and was designed to make a noise only, but to do no Execution? So that if it be *repugnant* to God's *Goodness* to execute this Penalty, it must be *repugnant* to his *Wisdom* to denounce it; but it being not only *consistent* with, but an Expression of his *Goodness* to denounce it, when he designs thereby to oblige us more firmly to our Duty, in which our *everlasting* Happiness is included, it may be no less an Expression of the same *Goodness* to execute it upon us, when we by our *obstinate* Persistence in Sin have render'd our selves *incapable* of Mercy. For now there being no more good to be done upon us, it will be an Act of *Goodness* in God to punish us *for ever*, if thereby any good may be done to others by us; if by making us *everlasting* Monuments of his *just* Indignation, he can everlasting-

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ly warn and secure *others* from those *desperate* Courses that ruined us. For in this Case his punishing us *for ever*, may be an *effectual* means to do that *good* to others which he intended to do to us by threatening to punish us *for ever*, and they may take warning by our Punishment, though we would take none by his Threatning. And when by being obstinately *deaf* to the Threat of *eternal* Perdition, which *God* denounced on purpose to oblige us to be *happy*, we have not only forfeited our selves to it, but have also *sinned* our selves into an Incapacity of having any *good* done upon us; the only Use which the *Divine goodness* can make of us for the *future*, is to do *good* to others by us; which it can no otherwise do, but by making our *everlasting* Suffering an *everlasting* Example for them to take warning by. For though there is no doubt but every *virtuous* Soul shall be hereafter so confirmed in its state of Beatitude, as that it shall never fall from it, yet shall it be confirmed no otherwise than by the force of those Reasons and *invincible* Motives which shall then continually urge, and immoveably determine it unto that which is good: One of which Reasons, as we may reasonably suppose, will be their prospect of the *endless* Miseries of the *Damned*, which will be an *everlasting* Monitor to them, and together with their *own* sense of the *ravishing* Pleasures of *Goodness*, will secure them *for ever* from falling. For if the *Angels* of *Heaven* took warning by the Fall and Ruin of their *Apostate Brethren*, as doubtless they did, and thereupon became more immovably confirmed in *Innocence* and *Goodness*; why may we not as well suppose, that one of those

those Reasons by which the *Spirits of just Men* are so immovably confirmed in their *Heavenly State*, is the *sad Example* of the *endless Miseries* of the *Wicked*? If therefore when *God* hath denounced *eternal Misery* against us on purpose to threaten us into *Happiness*, we will take no warning, it is an *Act of Goodness* in him to inflict it upon us, since thereby he may so effectually contribute to the confirming of *others* in *eternal Happiness*. For if we will not be wrought on by such a *dreadful Denunciation*, there is no good can be done upon us; and when we are past *Recovery*, and are forfeited by *our own Obstinacy* into the hands of *God's Vengeance*, it will be an *Act of Goodness* in him so to dispose of us as may be most for the *good* of *others*, and consequently to dispose of us to *eternal Misery*, and by so doing to make use of us as *Arguments* to confirm and establish *others* in *eternal Happiness*; that so our *Sufferings* may be to them what his *Threatnings* were to us, *Arguments* to oblige us to be *happy for ever*. And so I have done with the *First Thing* propos'd, which was to shew you that if *God* be so determined, he may, without any *Injury* either to his *Justice* or *Goodness*, retain *lost Souls* in the *Bondage of Hell* for ever, and absolutely refuse to accept any *Ransom* for them.

I now proceed to the *Second Head* of Discourse, namely, to prove that *God* is actually determined so to do. And this I shall endeavour to demonstrate by these *three Reasons*.

1. Because he hath already exacted a *Ransom* for the *Souls of Men*, to which no *other* can

be *equivalent* ; from whence we may reasonably infer, that if *this* be rejected he will accept no *other*.

2. Because he hath expressly declared *himself* to be thus determined.

3. Because having thus declared himself, we must suppose that either he intended this Declaration only for a *Scare-crow*, or that he is determined to act accordingly.

1<sup>st</sup>. That *God* is determined to conclude lost Souls under *endless* Misery, and admit no Ransom for them, appears from hence ; because he hath already exacted a Ransom for them, to which no *other* can be *equivalent* ; from whence we may reasonably infer, that if *this* be rejected, he will accept no *other*. When by our *first* Apostacy from *God*, we stained the Innocence of our Natures, and forfeited our Lives to the *just* Vengeance of *Heaven* ; so terribly was it then incensed against us, that it would accept no *meaner* Ransom for us than the *precious* Blood of the *Son of God* ; for so *St. Peter* tells us, *That we were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold ; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without blemish, and without spot,* 1 Pet. 1. 18, 19. And though this Ransom was of such a *vast* and *incomparable* Value, that all the Treasures in *Heaven* and *Earth* are *insignificant*. Trifles to it ; yet was the Virtue of it to extend no further than to those, who, by a *lively* Faith, and *unfeigned* Repentance, returned from their Rebellion to their Duty and Allegiance ; which if we do not, but instead thereof obstinately persist in our Wickedness and Folly, we renounce all our Part and Interest in the Blood of our *Saviour* ;  
and

and do ineffect declare, that upon such Terms as those we will not be beholding to him for our Ransom ; but that rather than accept of Redemption upon such *ungrateful* Conditions, we will trust to the Courtesy of the Vengeance of *God*, and abide the most *fatal* Effects of it. When therefore by persisting to the End in our Unbelief and Impenitence, we have finally rejected the Blood of *Christ*, and utterly extinguish'd all our Right and Title to it ; what Pretence of Reason have we to hope, that *God* will ever accept of any *other* Ransom for us? When to the Sins, by which we made the *first* Forfeiture of our Souls, we have added the *rank* and *horrid* Impiety of trampling on the Blood of the Son of *God*, and so are not only not Redeemed by it from the Vengeance to come, but are a *thousand* times more deeply inthrall'd to it by reason of that *additional* Guilt we have contracted by squandering away the Price of our Redemption : With what Face can we expect, in the midst of such *black* Circumstances, that *God* should accept of any Exchange for our Souls? He that would not release us from the Obligation of our *first* Guilt upon any *less* Consideration than the Blood of his Son, what *likelihood* is there that any Consideration should move him to release us after we have so prodigiously augmented our Guilt by rejecting his Blood, and finally renouncing all our Interest in it? Doubtless he that demanded so *vast* a Ransom for us when our Guilt was so comparatively *small* and *inconsiderable*, will account no Ransom *sufficient* when we have so transcendently enhanced and multiplied it. For if the Blood of *Christ*, which is of such an *unspeakable* value, can



give us no Relief without our *willing* Acceptance of it upon the Terms it is proposed to us, then when we have finally refused it on those Terms, it must be something that is more *valuable* than his Blood that must relieve us; something that is *sufficient* not only to Redeem us from those Guilt which his Blood was a Ransom for, but also to expiate the Guilt of our trampling on his Blood, which is the *greatest* and *blackest* of all. But since the Blood of *Christ* is incomparably the most *precious* Ransom that *Heaven* and *Earth* could afford, what hope is there that when *this* is rejected by us, *God* should accept any *other* in exchange for our Souls?

2dly. That *God* is really determined to conclude *lost* Souls under *endless* Misery, and admit no Ransom for them, appears also from hence, Because he hath expressly declared himself to be so determined. For so our *blessed Saviour*, who was the *great* Messenger of his Will to the World, hath expressly told us, that the *final* Sentence of the *Wicked* shall be to *everlasting Fire*, *Matth. 25. 41.* and that the Fate of *obstinate* Sinners, whom he compares to Chaff, shall be to be *burned up with unquenchable fire*. But perhaps you may object, that these Texts only prove the *Everlastingness* of the Fire in which they shall suffer, and not their *everlasting* Suffering in it; for this Fire perhaps may immediately consume, and utterly destroy them; and render them *insensible* of Misery for *ever*. To which I answer, That the contrary is most evident; for they are expressly said to live in this Fire, and to perform the Functions of *living* Beings in Misery; to *weep and wail, and gnash their*

their teeth, Matth. 13. 42. and in the Parable of Dives, he is said to lift up his eyes in Hell, being in torments, and to see Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom; and to cry out to Abraham, Father Abraham have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the top of his finger in water, and cool my tongue, for I am tormented in this flame, Luke 16. 23.

— A plain Evidence that this Fire is to torment and not to consume them. Well, but this you will say imports no more than their being tortured in Hell for some period of Time, after which, it may be, they may cease to be, and consequently to be miserable. To which I answer, That elsewhere it is expressly asserted, that this Torture is to endure for ever; for these, saith our Saviour, speaking of the Wicked, shall go away into everlasting Punishment, Matth. 25. 46. And how can their Punishment be everlasting, unless we suppose them to subsist everlastingly in it? If you say it is everlasting, only as it is an everlasting Destruction, or Privation of their Being: I answer, That in other Places of Scripture it is expressly asserted, that this everlasting punishment is a positive thing; for it is said to be a Worm that never dieth, Mark 9. 44. that is, that to all Eternity lives and preys upon the wretched Sufferers; and more expressly yet, Revel. 20. 10. those that are cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, are said to be tormented there day and night for ever and ever: Where the Greek word βασανισμός doth plainly denote positive Torment, and referring peculiarly to a Rack, denotes the kind of this positive Torment to be such as is not designed to put an end to our Lives, but to continue them with inexpressible Pains.

Pains. For this we know is the *proper* Use and Design of a Rack; and accordingly upon this *tormenting* Rack of *Hellish* Punishment they are said to have *no rest day nor night*, Rev. 14. 11. So that the *eternal* Misery of *lost* Souls is as fully and expressly asserted in *Scripture*, as it could well have been, had it been expressed with a Design to leave no pretence of Exception for Gainsayers; and when a thing is as plainly asserted to *be* as it could well have been if it really were, either we must suppose the Thing to *be*, or else the Assertion to be *fallacious*. So that if we think that God's *own* Word doth truly signify his Determination, we must from hence be forced to conclude, that he is really determined to shut up *lost* Souls in *eternal* Misery, and admit no Ransom for them.

3dly. And lastly, This also appears, because if after he hath thus declared himself, there were any Reason to think that he is not determined to act accordingly, that Reason would warrant us to believe that this Declaration was only intended for a *Scare-crow*, and consequently to contemn and despise it. For against all that hath been said, it may be (and is by some Men) objected, That *God* is not bound to do as he threatens; that when by our Disobedience we have incurred the Penalty he threatens, he hath an *undoubted* Right indeed to inflict it upon us, and consequently may, if he please, inflict it without any Wrong or Injustice; but then, if he please, he may dispense with it too, either in the *whole*, or in part, as he sees convenient. For the Punishment being only a Debt which the Sinner owes to him, he is

no more obliged than *other* Creditors are to exact the *utmost* farthing of it; but may exact or remit the *whole*, or abate what part soever he pleases; and therefore it is to be hoped, that he being a *merciful* Creditor will not be so *extreme* and *rigorous* as to exact of us the *utmost* Punishment we owe him; but that when he hath made us *smart* a while for our Folly, he will either release us into a more *happy* Condition, or put an end to our Beings and Miseries together. To which I might answer, That when by our Sins we have forfeited our selves to the *just* Vengeance of *God*, it is *infinite* Mercy and Goodness to others, to punish us according to his Threatning; and therefore when we by our Sins have render'd our selves *incapable* of his Mercy, that Mercy which now inclines him to do *good* to us, will then equally incline him to *good* to others, by the *dreadful* Example of our Punishment; and so he may be a very *merciful* Creditor, and notwithstanding exact of us the *utmost* Farthing. But this I have already largely insisted on, and therefore, *2dly*. I answer, That what God may do is not for us to determine when he may, or may not, and is obliged to neither; but when he hath expressly denounced what he will do, we can have no Reason to hope that he will be *better* than his Word. For if after that he hath denounced, that if we persist in our Sin he will punish us *for ever* for it, he should have left us any *just* Reason to hope that he will not, he would thereby have countermined himself, and baffled the Design of his *own* Denunciation, which is to terrify his *rebellious* Creatures from their Sins, and to aw them into Obedience to his Laws. But how  
much



much Reason soever he hath given me to hope that he will not be so *severe* to me as he threatens, so much Reason he must have given me not to be afraid of his Threatnings. If I had any *just* Reason to believe that he will be more *merciful* than to inflict what he denounces, it is an *irrational* thing for me to dread his Denunciations; for I know *God* will do as *just* Reason directs, and therefore I must conclude either my Reason to be *false*, or *God's* Denunciation to be a *Scare-crow*; for if there be any *just* Reason why his Mercy and Goodness should interpose, and avert the Execution of his Threats from me, I ought not to be afraid of them, because I am sure he can do nothing that his Mercy and Goodness forbids: But if there be no Reason for such an Interposure, I am unreasonably *presumptuous* to expect it. So that either my Expectation must be *groundless*, or my Fear of *God's* Threatnings *irrational*: And can it be imagined that the *Wise* *God* would ever go about to awe his Creatures into Obedience by threatening their Sin with such Punishments as he knows they have *just* Reason not to be afraid of? Whatsoever therefore *God* may do, I am sure if we go on in our Sins, we can have no Reason to hope that he will either not punish us at all, or *less* than he hath threatned; or consequently, that he will abate us *one* moment of that *eternal* Misery which he hath so plainly and expressly denounced against us. What then remains, but that since when our Soul is *lost*, it is *lost for ever*, we now take all *possible* care to secure it while we may.

V. I proceed now to the *Fifth* and *last* Proposition; That *this irrecoverable Loss of the Soul is of such VAST and UNSPEAKABLE Moment, that the Gain of all the World is not sufficient to compensate it: What shall it profit a Man, if he shall gain the whole World, and lose his own Soul?* That is, It will not profit him at all; nay it will be so far from *that*, that it will turn to his *unspeakable* Loss and Disadvantage: Though by renouncing his Profession of my Doctrine, or his Obedience of my Laws, a Man were sure to make himself Lord of all the World, and to possess and injoy it as long as he lived; yet if for so doing he should afterwards lose his Soul, as most certainly he will, he will find in the issue that he hath made a *woful* Bargain of it, and be forced to acknowledge himself a *vast* Loser when he comes to suffer those *intollerable* Damages which the Loss of a Soul implies. For the Proof of which, I shall run a Comparison between the *Gain* and the *Loss*, and therein endeavour to represent to you how much the Evil of *this* Loss exceeds the Good of *that* Gain; and this I shall do in these following Particulars:

1<sup>st</sup>. The *Good* that is in the Gain is *imaginary* and *fantastical*; but the *Evil* that is in the Loss is *real* and *substantial*.

2<sup>dly</sup>. The *Good* that is in the Gain is *narrow* and *particular*; but the *Evil* that is in the Loss is *large* and *universal*.

3<sup>dly</sup>. The *Good* that is in the Gain is *convertible* into *Evil*; but the *Evil* that is in the Loss is never to be improved into *Good*.

4<sup>thly</sup>. The

4thly. The *Good* that is in the *Gain* is *mixt* and *sophisticated*; but the *Evil* that is in the *Loss* is *pure* and *unmingled*.

5thly. The *Good* that is in the *Gain* is *full* of *Intermissions*; but the *Evil* that is in the *Loss* is *continual*.

6thly. The *Good* that is in the *Gain* is *short* and *transitory*; but the *Evil* that is in the *Loss* is *eternal*.

1st. The *Good* that is in the *Gain* is *imaginary* and *fantastical*; but the *Evil* that is in the *Loss* is *real* and *substantial*. For whatsoever we gain of this Worlds *Goods* beyond what is *necessary* to serve the *real* Occasions, and *modest* Conveniencies of this *present* Life, administers to no *other* purpose but only to gratify an *extravagant* Fancy: For all the *real* Need that a Man hath of these *worldly Goods*, is only to maintain and provide for his Body; for his Soul hath no more need of them, than an Angel hath of Money to buy Victuals and Clothes with: And one would think so *small* a thing as an *humane* Body is, could not need *many* things; and that a piece of *animate* Matter, some six foot long, might be very *easily* and *cheaply* provided for: And indeed so it would be if we could once forbear fancying its Needs to be *greater* than they are; but if we let loose the Reigns to an *ungoverned* Fancy, That will so extend its Needs beyond the Capacities of its Nature, that all the World will be *too* little to content the *extravagant* Appetites of this *little* Clod of Earth. Lay but your Fancies aside, and you will want no *other* Apparel but what is *sufficient* to keep you *warm*, and *clean*, and *modest*, and with this you may be  
very

very cheaply provided ; but if you will resolve to humour that *capricious* thing, you will want the Revenue of a *Lordship* to cover your Nakedness. Keep but your Fancies in order, and your Appetites will be contented with *plain* and *wholsom* Provisions, and this a *small* Income will furnish you with ; but if once you let loose that *roving* Faculty, and suffer it to grow *wanton* and *delicate*, that will so stretch your Appetites, that the stores of all the *four Elements* will scarce be *sufficient* to gratify their Luxuries. And so it is in all other things appertaining to the Body ; whose Wants according to Natures Measures are *small*, but according to Fancies are *infinite*. So that if a Man had all the World in his Possession, yet all but that *little* *little* part of it that is either naturally *necessary*, or rationally *convenient* for his *bodily* Subsistence, would be *good* for nothing but to humour the Desires of an *extravagant* Fancy ; which are so far from being quenched, that they are but the more inflamed by Injoyment. If I had all the Wealth of *Cresus*, the good Fortunes of *Cesar*, and the Dominions of *Alexander*, what would it advantage me ? I should only have abundance of things that I have no *real* need of ; things, that if I would my self, I might easily be as *happy* without, as I can be with them. For would I but make my Nature and my Reason the measure of my Wants, I might always live next door to Satisfaction ; and as for my Wants, they would be so *light* and *portable*, that I might easily take them, and carry them along with me, and lay them down almost where-soever I pleased. Whereas if I permit my Fancy to grow *wild* and *imaginative*, I shall always find  
my



my Wants doubled with my Injoyments; and whereas when I had but *five Pounds*, I needed but *five hundred*; when I have *five hundred*, I shall need *five thousand*; and so on till at last I need beyond all possibility of Satisfaction. Since therefore all that this World can do for me, besides the supplying of a *few modest* Needs, which a very *little* of it will do, what a *miserable* Loser shall I be, if merely to gratify my Fancy, I forfeit my Soul, and incur the *real* Miseries of a *woful* Eternity in Pursuit of the *fantastick* Joys of a moment? If to purchase things which I shall never be the better for, which while I have not, I do not need, and which when I have I shall not enjoy; I should not only squander away the most *substantial* Happiness, but plunge my self into a *vast* Abyss of *real* and *inmole-  
rable* Miseries: O good God, what a *woful* Bargain shall I have of it? For though the Pleasure of our Sin doth always vanish on the Brink of Fruition, and like a *golden* Dream, concludes in a *disappointed* Expectation; yet the Sting that is to follow it will produce in us not only a *real*, but an extremely *sharp* and *dolorous* Perception; so extremely *sharp*, that it will pierce our very Hearts, and cause us to roar out with Anguish for ever. And alas! what a *poor* Compensation is it for a Man that must e're long be enduring the Tortures of a *tedious* Famine, to be entertain'd a *few* Moments with the Picture of a Feast, or the Story of *Cleopatra's* Banquet? Or what Man in his Wits would ever forfeit himself, for the *mere* Fancy of a Pleasure, to the *lingering* Torments of a Rack? And yet, O wretched Sinner, thou attest a *thousand* times more extravagantly; who, by thy *unlawful* Pursuits

Pursuits of the *imaginary* Pleasures of this World, betrayest thy Soul to the *bitter* Torments of *Hell*.

2dly. The *Good* that is in the Gain of this World is *narrow* and *particular*, but the *Evil* that is in the Loss of a Soul is *large* and *universal*. 'Tis but a Part of our selves, and that the *worst* Part too, that this World's *Goods* can benefit and advantage; they can only clothe our Bodies more splendidly, and feed them more deliciously, and furnish them with more Plenty of *outward* Accommodations; but alas for the Soul, they are as *insignificant* to her, as *Musical* Sounds are to the Eye of the Body, or *magnificent* Shews to the Ear: They cannot improve the *meanest* Faculty about her, nor make her in any respect either the *better* or the *wiser*. And as for the Body it self, wherein all their Lines do center, there are a *thousand* Cases in which they are perfectly *useless*; for they cannot give *Health* to it in any *Sickness*, nor *Ease* in any *Pain*; they cannot recover a *lost* Sense, nor restore a *withered* Limb, nor rectify a *deformed* Feature; nor is it in their Power to reprieve it from the Grave one moment beyond the *natural* Period of its Mortality. So extremely *narrow* are these *worldly* Goods which we are so greedy of, that they can extend their Benefits no farther than the Body; nay, and even to *that* they are vastly *inadequate*, there being a *thousand* *bodily* Necessities whereunto they cannot extend themselves. So that if to purchase these we expose our selves to *eternal* Perdition, we shall have in comparison but a *drop* of *Good* to compensate our selves for an *Ocean* of *Misery*. For the *Misery* of *Hell* is as *vast* and *extensive* as our Capacity of Suffering, and hath in it an *appropriate* Torment

I

ment for every *sensible* Part of our Natures. It racks the *wretched* Soul in every Faculty, and fills up all its Capacities of Misery with Anguish and Vexation : It afflicts its Mind with *horrid* Apprehensions, wounds and gashes its Conscience with *dismal* Reflections ; it festers its Will with *black* and *venomous* Passions, and starves its Desires with *everlasting* Famine. And as it leaves no part of the Soul untormented, but covers it over from Head to Foot with Wounds, and Bruises, and *putrifying* Sores ; so when the Body at the Resurrection is reunited to it, the Misery of Hell will extend to this also ; for then it will have superadded to its *Spiritual* Plagues the most *exquisite* Instrument of *Corporeal* Torment, viz. the *dark*, and *noisom*, and *scorching* Flames of a *burning* World, which will seize upon the Bodies of *Reprobate Sinners*, they being finally abandoned to them by the *last* and *final* Sentence, and stick close to, and burn through them *for ever*. And their Bodies being thus wrapped and clothed in *flaming* Sulphur, must needs be exquisitely vexed in every Part and Member, and feel as many Torments as they have Senses to endure them. Thus the Miseries of *Hell*, you see, are far more *extensive* than the *Goods* of this World ; for whereas *these* extend only to our Bodies, and can relieve them but in a *few* of their Necessities, *those* over-spread both the Body and Soul, and are both *co-eternal* and *co-equal* with their *utmost* Capacities of Suffering : So that when by our *unlawful* Pursuits of the *Goods* of this World we forfeit our selves to *eternal* Perdition, we plunge our *whole* Nature into *intolerable* Misery for the Ease and the Pleasure of one *particular* Part. Now would any  
Man

Man in his Wits, do you think, eat *Rats-bane* for no other Reason, but only because it is *sweet*? Would he to please his *liquorish* Palate diffuse a *tormenting* Poison over all his Parts and Members? Or would he think the Pleasure of one *sweet* Gust a *sufficient* Compensation for all the *succeeding* Spasms and Convulsions? Surely no; none but a Mad-man could ever admit of such an Extravagance. And yet, *O wretched Sinner!* thou art far more *wild* and *extravagant*; for a *particular Good* thou throwest thy self headlong into an *universal* Misery; and to gratify thy Body in a *few little* things, dost utterly ruin both thy Body and Soul. To please thy self in *one* part, thou punishest thy self in *all*; and for the gratifying *one* Sense, derivest a *tormenting* Venom over all the Senses of thy Nature; and so *in fine*, wilt have nothing but the Pleasure of a Taste or a Touch to compensate thee for all the Agonies and Torments that thy Body and Soul together are *able* to sustain. And what a *poor* Compensation this is, I leave you to judg.

3dly. The *Good* that is in the Gain of this World is *convertible* into *Evil*; but the *Evil* that is in the Loss of a Soul is never to be improved into *Good*. When we are arrived to the Possession of those *outward* Goods which at present we do so greedily grasp after, it is a very *uncertain* thing whether they will prove Goods to us or no; whether, even as to this Life, we shall be the *better*, or the *worse* for them. For it is very often seen that these *worldly* Goods prove the *worst* of Plagues to those that are the Owners of them, and that those things which we account the Blessings of this Life, do prove the Curses and Miseries of it. When by a



*thousand Lies, Flatteries, and Circumventions*, a Man hath raised himself up to that Pinnacle of Preference which his Ambition aspired to, how often hath that Height proved the Occasion of his Fall, by exposing him to those Storms of Envy and Misfortune which would have blown over his Head, had he sat quietly below, and been contented to enjoy himself in a more private Fortune? And so when by an infinite number of *Rapines, and Oppressions, Frauds, and dishonest Compliances*, a Man hath amassed together a vast deal of Wealth, how often hath that proved the Occasion of his Undoing? Sometimes by exposing him to the rapacious Covetousness of others, but most commonly to the ill Effects of his own extravagant Luxuries. For usually when Fraud is the *Procurer* of Wealth, Wealth is the *Band* of Luxury; this being the best Expedient to drown the Cry of the Guilt of our Dishonesty. And then by that time Luxury hath produced its natural Effects, it commonly leaves the wealthy Possessor in a far worse Condition than Poverty; it leaves him so racked with the Gout or the Stone, so over-whelmed with Catarrhs or Dropsies, that the miserable Man would be heartily contented to part with all his Wealth for Ease, and to return to Poverty so he might but return to the Health of an honest Plough-man; whereas would he have contented himself with the honest Acquest of a moderate Fortune, he need have wanted nothing but Temptations to Luxury, and Provisions for tormenting Diseases. So that in short, whilst we are pursuing this World's Goods, we know not what our Game will be till we have seized on it; peradventure instead of *Venison* we are

are hunting a Serpent, which, when we have caught, will sting and invenom us, and prove a Plague instead of a Satisfaction. And is it not *extravagant* Madnefs then for Men to run themselves into all those Miseries, which *everlasting* Ruin and Perdition implies, for the sake of such *uncertain* Goods, which when they are possessed of, for all they know, may do them a thousand times more Mischief than Good? For as for those *future* Miseries, which by our *sinful* Pursuits of these *present* Goods we incur, they are all such *absolute* and *essential* Evils, that there is not one drop of Good to be extracted out of them; for as they are *eternal* they are of an *unalterable* Nature, and the same *insupportable* Plagues they were yesterday, they will continue to be to day, and *for ever*. Indeed if we were to out-live them, they might be accidentally *advantageous* to us; they might discipline our Natures for an Happiness to come, and serve as so many Toils to our *future* Pleasures; and when they are past, the Remembrance of them, like *bitter* Sauce, might give a Relish to our Joys, and render them more *grateful* and *delicious*: But we being to indure 'em for ever, there is nothing Good can succeed them, no *possible* Advantage can be derived from them; for in Miseries that have no End, there can be nothing but Misery. And is it not very strange then, that Men should forfeit their Souls to such *unalterable* Miseries, for such Goods as may be Plagues to them? when for all they know there may be such a Train of Mischiefs at the heels of these *Pleasures*, and *Profits*, and *Honours* they are so greedy of, as may outweigh all the good of them, and render them a

dear Penny-worth, though they had never pawned their Souls for them. And if it so prove, as it is very *probable* it may, then their Bargain is *worse* than if they had pawned their Souls for nothing; because they have incurred *one* Misery only to seize upon *another*, and have waded through a *temporal* to come at an *eternal* one.

4thly. The *Good* that is in the Gain of this World, is *mixed* and *sophisticated*; but the *Evil* that is in the Loss of a Soul is *pure* and *unmingled*. Should a Man sell his Soul for never so *great* a share of this World's Goods, he would find he had gotten but a very *uneasy* Purchase; a Purchase as he can neither secure without a *great* deal of Care, nor yet enjoy without a *great* deal of Dissatisfaction. For what we call ours, is really ours but for our Portion of Expende and Use; and all that is ours beyond this, is only the Title and the Care, and the Trouble of securing and dispensing it; for let but your Servants walk into your *Gardens of Pleasure*, and the Air shall fan them with as *gentle* Gales, the Flowers delight them with as *fragrant* Odours, and the Birds entertain them with as *ravishing* Melodies. And in some sense your *meanest* Servants enjoy what you have with *far* more freedom than you; for your Possessions are like a *great* Harvest, which many Labourers must bring in, and more must eat of; only you are the Center of all the Cares, and you they fix on; but the Profits run out to all the Lines of your Circle, who usually enjoy their *several* shares with much more Peace and Quiet than you. You take the Pains to dig the Well, and undergo the Care of supplying and maintaining it; and when you have done, you can drink

drink no more of it than the *meanest* Slave about you; but what you drink can't be so *sweet* and *pure*, because it is dashed with many more Cares and Disturbances. For considering the *infinite* Hazards these *worldly* Goods are exposed to, they must needs carry with them abundance of Cares and Disquietudes; so that when you are possessed of them, you only grasp a Bundle of *gilded* Thorns, which while they *please* your Eyes, will *prick* your Hearts, and continually disease you in the Injoyment of them. And then for the Injoyment it self, considered abstractedly from those Cares that surround it, alas it is such as rather creates Desire than Satisfaction; for though at a distance these *Terrestrial* Goods do promise us *fair*; and raise in us *vast* and *boundless* Hopes; yet still when we approach nearer to them, we find our selves miserably deceived. And then our Injoyment falling so vastly *short* of our Expectation, all those *swelling* Hopes that flattered and tolled us on, fall flat immediately under the Disappointments of Fruition; and accordingly our Desires missing their *promised* Satisfaction, grow more *outrageous* and *violent*. And thus our Injoyments, as they are compassed with Vexations, so are they mingled with *restless* Discontents, as being all *too little* for our *vast* Desires; which are therefore rather enraged than satisfied with them. What *infinite* Losers therefore must those Men be, who to compass those *sophisticated* Goods which have so many Evils intermixed with them, forfeit their Souls to *everlasting* Perdition? which is so *vast* and so *intense* an *Evil*, as will admit no degree of *Good* to be intermingled with it; a Misery so *pure* and *unallayed*,



as that it totally excludes all Communication with Happiness, and will not admit the *least* Hope of Ease or Refreshment. For what Ease can we hope for in the *everlasting* Burnings? What Refreshment can we expect in the *unquenchable* Lake of Fire and Brimstone? Doubtless we may as soon hope to find a Cordial in the Sting of a Scorpion, or *sprightly Nectar* in a Nest of Wasps, as one degree of Ease or Comfort in *Hell*. There is not a Gleam of *Light* in all that Region of *Darkness*, not a Drop of *Sweet* in all that *vast* Ocean of *Gall* and *Wormwood*; but it is all Misery, *sharp* and *exquisite* Misery, without the *least* Mixture of Ease, or Hope of Mitigation. Can we then be so *stupid* as to imagine the injoying this World's *Goods*, which are all such Compositions of *Good* and *Evil*, worth the enduring such *pure* and *abstracted* Miseries for ever? Would you for the Pleasure of an *intemperate* Draught that will quickly end in a Qualm or an Headach, be contented to indure the Torment of being *impaled*? Or provided you might spend this Night in your *lascivious* Injoyment, which after a *few* Moments will conclude in Shame and Remorse, would you be willing to roar upon the Rack all the Night after? doubtless you would not. And yet, God knows, these *Pleasures* are not comparably so *disproportionate* to those *Pains*, as the Pleasures of this World are to the Pains of *Eternity*. How then is it *possible* that such *Bittersweets* as these are, *Sweets* that are chequered with so many Cares, and allayed with so many Discontents, and Disappointments, should be *sufficient* to countervail those *intolerable* Miseries which the Loss of our Souls implies?

5thly. The

5thly. The *Good* that is in the Gain of this World is full of Intermissions ; but the *Evil* that is in the Loss of a Soul is *continual*. If I were Lord of all the World, I should never be able to live in a *constant* Injoyment of it. For such *wretched* Counterfeits are all the Pleasures of Sense, that they will not indure the Test of a *long* Fruition ; for at the best they are but Frolicks of Delight that never *seize* us but when we are turned *up* to them in *Moods* and *Fits*, and all the Complacencies we have in them are nothing but the *little* Starts of our Appetite, which, as soon as it hath done craving, grows a *weary* of them, and so injoys and loaths them by Turns ; for they can dwell no longer upon the Appetite than while the Necessities of Nature do continue ; and every *fresh* Morfel after the Hunger is satisfied, is but a *new* Labour to a *tired* Digestion, and so instead of being a Pleasure becomes an Oppression. So that it is but a very *little* while that the Pleasure of any *outward* Injoyment continues ; for till it hath pleased us it is not a Pleasure, and when it hath, it ceases to be so ; and so it dies as soon as it is born, and its Nativity is only a *Prelude* to its Funeral. Thus all our Injoyments are stinted by our Appetites, which are naturally *incapable* of a *continued* Fruition. But then besides this, our Injoyments are *liable* to a thousand *other* Interruptions, which are are not in our power to prevent or avoid ; for whether we will or no, we must be some times out of Humour, and then all the Pleasures in the World are most *tedious* Impertinencies ; and some times we must *sleep*, and then we are *insensible* of them ; and sometimes be *sick*, and then they are as *tastless* as

a Cork ; and sometimes be *griped* with *guilty* Thoughts, and *ill-aboding* Reflections, and then, instead of Pleasures, they are our Horrors and Vexations. Thus our Injoyment, like an Ague, is full of Intermiſſions ; now we are *pleased*, and anon we are *displeased*, and immediately after the *hot Fit* is over, the *cold One* returns ; and thus it would be if we had all the World in our Poſſeſſion. And indeed the Intervals of our Injoyment of theſe *Terreſtrial* Goods are uſually *longer* than the Injoyment it ſelf, and the *hot Fits* of our Pleaſure and Fruition are generally ſooner over, than thoſe *cold Ones* of Diſpleaſure and Diſſatisfaction that ſucceed them. So that if I could command all the Goods in the World, they would be ſo far from yielding me a *continued* Happineſs, that in all Probability the Interruptions of my Happineſs would take up a *greater* Part of my Life than the Injoyment of it ; and perhaps for every *one* moment of Fruition, I ſhould ſpend *two* either in Pain, or in Non-perception of Pleaſure. How then is it *poſſible* that ſuch a *broken* and *diſcontinued* Happineſs as this ſhould ever make us amends for thoſe Miſeries that are included in the Loſs of our Souls ? For to loſe our Souls is to be *miſerable* without any Interruption, to be eternally grieved and tortured without any Intervals of Eaſe or Refreshment. For the State of Perdition is a *continual* Torment ſpun out into an *endleſs* Duration, wherein there are no *Days* of Reſt, nor *Nights* of Sleep, nor *intermediate* Pauſes of Eaſe ; where the Fire never ceaſes burning, nor the Worm gnawing, but *Wo* ſucceeds *Wo* without Intermiſſion, and Miſeries, like the *nimble* Minutes of Time, follow Miſeries, and

and tread close upon *one anothers* Heels. Hence, Rev. 20. 10. those that are cast into this Lake of Perdition, are said to be *tormented day and night for ever*; which plainly implies that their Miseries are all but one *uninterrupted* Torment, or *continued* Succession of *dolorous* Perceptions *for ever*. And if so, *O blessed God*, what a *poor* Compensation for it are the *broken* Joys of this World? For if the Misery of *Hell* were to last no longer than the Happiness of this World, yet if for *one Week's* Happiness here I were to indure *another Week's* Misery *there*, I should have a *miserable* Bargain of it; because the Happiness being so *interrupted*, and the Misery so *continued*, I must in the same space undergo at least *double* the Misery that I enjoyed Happiness. And what Man would be contented to live all the *next* Week in a Cauldron of *boiling* Oyl, wherein he knows he shall be continually *tormented*, provided he may spend *this* Week in an *uninterrupted* Injoyment of the most *grateful* Luxuries, which he knows he must be as often and as long *insensible* as he can be *sensible* of?

6thly. And lastly, The *Good* that is in the Gain of this World is *fading* and *transitory*; but the *Evil* that is in the Loss of the Soul is *eternal*. For so *impotent* are all this World's *Goods*, that they cannot insure us of one moment's Injoyment of them. It may be as soon as ever we have filled our Bags and Barns with the Wages of our Iniquity, and have a *plentiful* Provision for many Years Ease and Luxury, we may be snatched away upon the very Brinks of Injoyment, and hurried into a *woful* Eternity, there to consume those Years in Misery and Torment,



ment, which we promised to spend in Pleasure and Voluptuousness. This you know was the Case of the *rich Epicure* in the Gospel; how did the jolly Wretch congratulate and applaud himself in the *golden Purchase* of his Frauds and Oppressions? How did he vaunt of his *own Prudence*, and good Conduct, and strut and swell with *munificent Conceits* of the *happy Condition* he was now arrived to, when all of a sudden his *unprepared Soul* was surprized with a Summons to Eternity? And then how *blank* did the *Fool* look upon the *fatal News*, that *that Night* must put an End to all his Hopes and Pleasures, and deprive him of all those *future Injoyments* with which he had promised to recompence all his *past Toils and Labours*? With what Regret and Reluctancy was he dragg'd from the *dear Purchase* of his Sweat and Sin? and in what Agonies of Horror did he groan out his *wretched Spirit*, when instead of injoying the *Goods he had laid up for many Years*, he felt himself sinking into a *woful Eternity*, and lie weltring there in *unquenchable Flames*, whilst he hoped to have been wallowing *here* in Ease and Voluptuousness? But suppose we should injoy the many Years Ease which this *vain-glorious Fool* was disappointed of; alas those Years will quickly expire, and *Threescore and ten*, or *Fourscore* at most, is the *utmost Period* we can hope to arrive to; but then from thence commences an *Eternity of Misery* which *Millions of Millions of Ages* can neither shrink nor exhaust, and compared with the *longest Life of Pleasure* hath not the Proportion of one *single moment*. So that if in Exchange for our Souls we could purchase a Lease of Life as long as *Methuselah's*, and a Lease of Happiness

piners parallel to that Life, yet in the Conclusion we should find it a most *woful* Bargain; because when both these Leases are expired, as they must at last though it be *long* first, we must remove into a State of *intolerable* Misery, whose Duration will be always equally because it will be always infinitely *distant* from a Period; and when we are there, all that *long* Train of Happiness that is *past* will seem but a Minute's Dream in Comparison of that *Eternity* of Misery that is to come. But, *O good God*, when for *thirty* or *forty* Years Pleasure upon Earth, I have suffered a *thousand* Years Torment in *Hell*, and after that have *endless Thousands of Thousands* more to suffer, how dearly shall I rue my *own* Folly and Madnes, that for the sake of a *few* Moments Pleasure have run my self headlong into such an *endless* Misery! Consider therefore, *O my Soul*! within a *little* while all these *outward* Goods which I have purchased by my Sin, will signify no more to me than if they had never been, and all their *alluring* Relishes will be gone and forgotten *for ever*; but then for *Ten thousand* Millions of Ages after I shall be feeling the Smart, and enduring the Stings of them. When all my *ill-gotten* Wealth is shrunk into a *Winding-sheet*, and my *vast* Possessions into *six foot* of Earth, and I have none of its Pumps or Pleasures *left* either to go along with, or to follow after me, then will the Guilt of all stick close to me, and raise a Cry on me as *high* as the Tribunal of *God*; a Cry that will draw down an *everlasting* Vengeance on my Head, and ring Peals of Thunder in my Conscience *for ever*. Lord! what a *poor* Amends then is the *momentary* Injoyments of the Goods of this World to me, and that after a *few* Years

Years must pass into *another*, and there languish away a *long* Eternity under the *intolerable* Anguish of a *damned* Spirit.

And thus you see, upon a *just* Survey of the Gains of this world, and the Loss of a Soul, how infinitely *short* the Happiness of the *one* is to make us any *tolerable* Compensation for the Miseries of the *other*. And if the Gain of all the World be *too little* to countervail this Loss, what *miserable* Losers are the Generality of Men that forfeit their Souls upon a far *less valuable* Consideration? For no Man was ever yet, or is ever like to be so *prosperous* in his Sin, as to gain the whole World by it; that is a *Scramble* in which Millions are engaged, and of which every one will be catching a Share. But, alas, for the Generality, the Purchase of Mens Sin is so *small* and *inconsiderable*, that it is scarce a *valuable* Consideration for the Soul of a Rat. For what doth the *common* Swearer get by all his *senseless* and *impertinent* Oaths, which are capable of serving no *other* Purpose but only to stop the Gaps of his Speech, or to man his Rage, that he may rave, and play the Fool a little more genteely? What doth the Drunkard gain by all his Intemperances, but only a *short* Fit of *frantick* Mirth, and *extravagant* Jollity, which, after a few Hours, ends in a *sleepless* Night, a *sick*, and *uneasy* Stomach, and a *sottish* Confusion over all his Senses? What doth the *envious* and *malicious* Man get by all his *studied* Mischiefs and Revenges? When he hath pluck'd out his Enemy's Eye, he cannot put it into his own Head, nor can he increase the Stock of his *own* Happiness by diminishing his Adversaries.

When

When he hath made *another* the worse, he is never the better for it; nor do his Injuries grow less by being retaliated; So that he vexes and disquiets himself to no purpose, but to make his Enemy bleed; he keeps his own Wound green, and consequently multiplies Evils in vain, and prosecutes Mischief only for Mischief's sake. I confess there are some Vices that are not altogether so *unprofitable* as these; in *some* Vices there is a Prospect of worldly Gain and Greatness, in *others* of sensitive Pleasure and Delight; but alas, when after a few days Injoyment of those Gains and Pleasures, I am called away from them, and transported into a woful Eternity, there to expiate the Guilts of them with those sharp and everlasting Torments I shall be made to endure, how shall I be astonished at my own desperate Folly to think what a mad Bargain I have made? what an Happiness I have sold to purchase those Gains? what a Misery I have incurred to grasp and injoy those Pleasures? O! now what would I give for a Goal-delivery from Hell, or but for the least Mitigation of my Agonies and Torments! If I had all the Wealth that I purchased by my Sin, and ten thousand times more, how willingly would I part with it to bribe my Flames, and corrupt my Tormentors? O! now I shall wish a thousand and a thousand times that I had rather chosen to famish for want of Bread, than to injoy those accursed Profits and Pleasures that were the Fruits and Wages of mine Iniquities; but now alas it will be too late to Repent. As yet we have the Opportunity to retrieve our own Folly, and to revoke and cancel this our desperate Bargain, and by



by our *serious* Repentance and *heartly* Renunciation of the Temptations of this World, we may release our selves from our Covenant with Death, and Agreement with Hell. But if we out-stay our Opportunity a *few* Moments longer, till Death hath put an end to it, the *fatal* Bargain will be sealed past all Revocation.

OF THE  
*Divinity & Incarnation*  
 OF OUR  
 SAVIOUR.

JOHN I. 14.

*And the Word was made Flesh, and dwelt among us, ( and we beheld his Glory, the Glory as of the only begotten of his Father ) full of Grace and Truth.*

**T**HESE Words contain Three distinct Propositions; I. *The Word was made Flesh*: II. *And dwelt among us full of Grace and Truth*: III. *And we beheld his Glory, the Glory as of the only begotten of his Father.* Of each of these I intend to discourse in their order.

I. The first is, That *the Word was made Flesh*. In handling of which I shall do these three Things:

1. Shew you what we are here to understand by *The Word*.
2. Why it is called *The Word*.
3. What we are to understand by *The Word's* being made *Flesh*.

K

1. What

1. What is meant by *the Word* ? I answer in general, That by *the Word* here we are to understand Christ : For in the following Verse you will find that this *Word* was He of whom *John the Baptist* was the *Forerunner*, and to whom he bare Witness, saying, *This was he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me, is preferred before me ; for he was before me.* And in the other *Evangelists* you will find that it was *Christ* whose *Forerunner* the *Baptist* was, and to whom he gave this Testimony, as you may see at your leisure, *Matth.* 3. 11. and *Mark* 1. 7. *Luke* 3. 16. where you find *John Baptist* giving the same Testimony to *Christ* which here he gives to *the Word*, especially v. 27. of this Chapter. Which is a plain Evidence that *Christ* and the *Word* are only different Titles of the same Person. But that I may more particularly explain to you the Meaning of this Phrase, I will briefly deliver my Sense of it in these following Propositions :

1. That this Phrase, *The Word*, as it is by way of *Eminence* applied to a particular Subject, is derived into the *New Testament* from the *Theology* of the *Jews* and *Gentiles*.

2. That the *New Testament* giving no distinct Explication of it, it is most safe and reasonable to fetch the Sense of it from that ancient *Theology* whence it was derived.

3. That the *Theology* from whence it was derived, uses it to signify a vital and *Divine Subsistence*.

4. That therefore our *Saviour*, to whom it is applied in the *New Testament*, is that vital and *Divine Subsistence*.

1. That

1. That this Phrase *The Word*, as it is by way of Eminency applied to a particular Subject, is derived into the *New Testament* from the *Theology* of the *Jews* and *Gentiles*. Which will plainly appear to any one that shall consider the *exact* Agreement between those Titles and Characters which are given to our *Saviour* in the *New Testament*, and those which the *Jews* and *Gentiles* give to the *Word*, so often mentioned in their *Theology*. For as for this Phrase ὁ λόγος, *The Word*, it is very anciently used in the Writings both of *Jews* and *Gentiles*. For Rab. *Azariel* in his Treatise of Holiness, quotes it out of the *Book of the Creation*, which was written by Rab. *Abraham* an ancient *Cabalist*, who the *Jews* say was the *Patriarch Abraham* himself. *The Spirit*, saith he, meaning the most High God, bringeth forth the *Word* and the *Voice*, and these Three are one God. Thus also it is frequently used in the *Chaldee Paraphrase* as eminently appropriated to a *Divine Person*: So in *Isa.* 45. 17. instead of *Israel shall be saved in the Lord*, they read it, *by the Word of the Lord*; and *Jerem.* 1. 8. instead of *I am with thee*, they read, *because my Word is with thee*: and *Gen.* 15. 1. instead of *I am thy shield*, they read, *my Word is thy shield*; and so in sundry other places. And, which is very observable, *Psal.* 110. 1. instead of *The Lord said unto my Lord*, they read, *The Lord said unto his Word*; which Words our *Saviour* applies to himself, *Matth.* 22. 44. as being himself that *Eternal Word*, or λόγος, there mentioned. And in the same Sense also it was very anciently used in the Writings of the *Gentile Philosophy*. Thus *Zeno*,



<sup>1</sup> Tertull. Apologet. c. 36. Pam. Hunc. (i. e. λόγον) Zeno determinat factitorem qui cuncta in dispositione formaverit, eundemq; & fatum vocari & Deum & animum Jovis.

<sup>2</sup> Stromat. L. 5 p. 607. Εἰς δὲ λόγον θεῶν ἐλέγας, τέτρωπερ ἐδράβε, Ἐυδύνων κραδῆς νοερὸν κύλος, ἀδ' ἐπίβαινε Ἀτραπιτῆ, μῦνον δ' ἑσόρα κόμοιο ἀνακτα Ἀθάνατον.

<sup>3</sup> Epinomis.

as *Tertullian* tells us <sup>1</sup>, speaks of a λόγος by which the World was made, and which he calls *Fate*, and *God*, and the *Soul of Jupiter*. And the ancient *Orpheus*, as he is quoted by *Clemens Alexandrinus* <sup>2</sup>, exhorts Men to behold and contemplate the Divine Word, who is the immortal King of Heaven. And *Plato* <sup>3</sup> tells us, that the Motions of the Stars were disposed and ordered by the Word. By which it's plain that this Phrase was used as appropriate to a Divine Person, both by *Jews* and *Gentiles*, long before the Writing of the *New*

*Testament*. And that the *New Testament* derived it from their Writings is apparent; for that it attributes to *Christ* the same Titles and Characters which they were wont to attribute to the λόγος. Thus as the *New Testament* calls *Christ* the *Messias*, *The Word*, so the *Chaldee Paraphrase* expressly tells us that *Messias* is called the *Word of God*, *Osee*, cap. 7. Thus as *St. Paul* calls him the *King immortal*, so *Orpheus* in the afore-named Place calls him ἀνακτα ἀθάνατον, the *King-immortal*. And where-as *Christ* is said to be the *Image of God*, 2 Cor. 4. 4. to be the shining forth of his *Glory*, and the express Character of his Person, *Heb.* 1. 3. *Philo* calls him

χαρακτήρ θεῦ <sup>4</sup>, the σκια and εἰκὼν θεῦ <sup>5</sup>; that is, the Character of God, and the Shadow and Image of God: And *Plotin*, That it is a Light

<sup>4</sup> Lib. 2 de Agriculturâ p. 169. Edit. Genev. 1613.

<sup>5</sup> Leg. Alleg. l. 2. p. 60.

*Light streaming forth from God, even as Brightness doth from the Sun*<sup>1</sup>. And as St.

*John* in the first Verse of this Chapter tells us, That the Word

*was from the beginning with God, and that it was God; so Philo* tells us, that by Prerogative of Eldership he abideth with the Father; and Zeno, in the afore-named place, that he is God;

and Plotin<sup>2</sup> tells us, That being the Word of God, and the Image

of God, he is inseparably conjoined with him. And whereas *Christ* tells us, That he is the Light of the World, *John* 8. 12. the Manna which cometh down from Heaven; and the Bread of Life, *John* 6. 33, 35.

The same *Philo* styles him the Word, the Light<sup>3</sup>, the Manna<sup>4</sup>, the ἀρετῶν and τροφὴν ἣν ἔδωκεν ὁ θεὸς τῇ ψυχῇ<sup>5</sup>; that is, the Bread and Food which God hath given to the Soul. And whereas it is said,

that the Father is in Christ, that he dwells and abides in him, *John* 14. 10. the same Author says πατρὸς δὲ δικοῦ ὁ λόγος, ἐν ᾧ διατῆται<sup>6</sup>; that is, the Word is the House of the Father, in whom he dwells. Whereas

*Christ* is said to have a Name, *Phil.* 2. 9. and to be advanced above all Principalities and Powers, *Eph.* 1.

21. *Philo* tells us that this Divine Word is ὑπὲρ πάντων τοῦ κόσμου, καὶ πρεσβυτάτης

τῶν ὁσά γέγονε<sup>7</sup>; that is, above all Worlds, and the most ancient of

all things that are. Whereas *Christ* is said to be the High Priest over the House of God; *Heb.* 10. 21.

<sup>1</sup> Enn. 5. l. f. c. 6.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Philo de Opif. mundi. p. 4, 5.

<sup>4</sup> Quod det. pot. inf. fol. p. 137.

<sup>5</sup> Leg. Alleg. l. 2. p. 70, & 71.

<sup>6</sup> De Migrat. Abrah. p. 304.

<sup>7</sup> Leg. Alleg. p. 71.

Philo tells us, that the World is the Temple of God,  
 ἐν ᾧ καὶ ἀρχιερεὺς ὁ πρωτόγονος αὐτῷ  
<sup>1</sup> De Somniis, p. 463. θεῷ λόγος<sup>1</sup>; that is, in which  
 the First-born Divine Word is the  
 High Priest. Whereas Christ is  
 said to be the Son of God, and the First-born of every  
 Creature; Plato calls him, the  
<sup>2</sup> De Repub. l. 6. begotten Son of the Good<sup>2</sup>; Plotin,  
<sup>3</sup> Enn. 5. l. 8. c. 12. the Son of God<sup>3</sup>; and Philo, the  
<sup>4</sup> De Somn. p. 463. First-begotten Son and Word of  
 God<sup>4</sup>. Again, whereas God is  
 said to have created the World by Christ, Heb. 1.  
 2. and to have committed the Government of it  
 to him; Philo calls the θεῷ λόγος, the ὁ πηδαιχτής  
 καὶ κυβερνήτης τῷ παντί<sup>5</sup>; that is,  
<sup>5</sup> De Cherub. p. 88. the Governour of all things, and  
<sup>6</sup> De Somn. p. 466. the ὑπαρχος θεῷ<sup>6</sup>, the Vice-roy of  
<sup>7</sup> Lib. Cherub. p. 100. God; and also ὄργανον θεῷ δι' ὃ  
 κόσμος κατεσκευάσθη<sup>7</sup>; that is, the  
 Instrument of God by whom he  
 made the World. As in Christ the Fulness of the God-  
 head is said to dwell, Colos. 2. 9. so Plotin tells us of  
 the νῦς, or λόγος, that it is filled  
<sup>8</sup> Ennead. 5. l. 3. c. 12. with God<sup>8</sup>. As Christ is called  
 the great Shepherd of our Souls,  
 1 Pet. 2. 25. so Philo tells us,  
 that God, who is King and Pastor of the World, hath  
 appointed the Word his first-begotten Son, τὴν ἐπιμέλειαν  
 τῆς ἱερᾶς ἀγέλης διατι μὴγάλη βα-  
<sup>9</sup> De Agricult. p. 152. σιλείως ὑπαρχος διαδέξιδαι<sup>9</sup>, to un-  
 dertake the Care of his sacred Flock,  
 as his own Vice-roy and Substitute :  
 and accordingly in the same place he makes The  
 Word to be that Angel whom God had promis'd to  
 send

send before the Camp of *Israel* to conduct them through the *Wilderness*. In short, as the *Angels* are said to be subject unto *Christ*, 1 Pet. 3. 22. and as *Christ* is said to be the *Angel* or *Messenger* of *God*, Joh. 9. 4. so *Philo* calls the most ancient Word the ὁ ἀρχάγγελος<sup>1</sup>; that is, the Prince of the *Angels*, and the τὸν ἄγγελον θεοῦ<sup>2</sup>; the *Angel* or *Messenger* of *God*. And, to name no more, as *Christ* is called the *Mediator* of the new Covenant, Heb. 12. 24. and the *Intercessor* between *God* and *Man*, Heb. 7. 25. and the *Propitiation* and *Atonement*: So saith *Philo*, (which is highly worthy of our Observation) the word ἰκέτης μὲν ἐστὶ, &c.<sup>3</sup> is the *Intercessor* for *Mortals* with the immortal *God*, and also the *Embassador* of that great *King* to his *Subjects*; which Office, saith he, he willingly undertook, saying, I will stand in the middle between the *Lord* and you, as being neither unborn as *God*, nor born as you; but being a *Medium* between those two *Extreams*, I will be a *Pledge* for both; for his *Creatures*, that they shall not utterly apostatize from him; for *God*, that he will not be wanting in his *Fatherly Care* towards them. And in another place he tells us, that the θεὸς λόγος is τῆς ἀρεσκείας κεφαλὴ καὶ τέλος<sup>4</sup>; that is, the *Beginning* and the *End* of *God's Good-will* to the *World*; which is all one with *Propitiation*.

<sup>1</sup> Quæst Rerum divin. hæc. p. 397.

<sup>2</sup> De Somn. p. 466.

<sup>3</sup> Quæst. Rerum. Divin. her. p. 397.

<sup>4</sup> De Somnii, p. 447.

And these Authorities of *Philo* I have the rather insisted upon, because he being a *Jew* and a *Platonick Philosopher*, must needs understand the *Theology* of *Jews* and *Gentiles*; and living about the



Time of our *Saviour*, he must be supposed to have written in *Terms* that were then in use, and were very well understood both by *Jews* and *Gentiles*: And if so, then it must necessarily follow that this Phrase *The Word*, so common in that *Author*, was very commonly used both by *Jews* and *Gentiles* in our *Saviour's* Time, and consequently that it was derived from them, and so appropriated to our *Saviour* by the *inspired Writers* of the *New Testament*. And indeed it is not to be imagined how those *inspired Writers* should ever have so exactly agreed with the *Jews* and *Gentiles* in the Titles and Characters of the *Eternal Word*, had not either they themselves, or the *Spirit of God*, which dictated to them, purposely derived it from them.

2. That the *New Testament* giving no distinct Explication of this Phrase *The Word*, it is most safe and reasonable to fetch the Sense of it from that *ancient Theology* whence it was derived. I do not deny but it is usual with all Writers to use *Terms* and *Phrases* by way of Accommodation, and to illustrate their Sense by alluding to something that is like it; and therefore are not always to be understood in the Sense which those *Terms* and *Phrases* do most commonly signify, but in a Sense that hath some Proportion with it, as the Drift and Connection of their Discourse doth plainly intimate. But when Writers use Words in a *literal* Sense, without any Note of Allusion, and without explaining themselves into any *different* Sense, either they must mean the *same* Thing which those Words do commonly signify, or else they must mean to deceive and impose upon their Readers. And thus stands the Case before us; our *Saviour*

is here stiled *The Word*, a *Term of Art* which was very common both in the *Jewish* and *Gentile Philosophy*; and neither here, nor any where else, is there the *least* Intimation that he is called so, only by way of Allusion; nor is it in all the *New Testament* explained into any other Sense than that wherein it was commonly used; and therefore the Intent of the *Sacred Writers* in using it must be either to denote the same thing which it signified before, or to deceive and impose upon the World. But doubtless if the *Holy Spirit*, which inspired those Writers, had meant any thing else by it than what it ordinarily signifies, he would have told us of it, and not have given us such an *unavoidable* Occasion to mistake in so great a Doctrine, by clothing its Sense in such a *Phrase* as generally signifies what he never meant. For when he called *Christ* by the same Name, and attributed the same Titles and Characters by which the *Jews* and *Gentiles* were wont to describe their ΛΟΓΟΣ, he could not but foresee that all *inquisitive* Persons would be apt to conclude that he meant the same thing; and therefore if he had not meant so, he would doubtless either not have given him that Name, and those Titles, or else, to prevent our being imposed upon by them, he would have explained them into some other meaning; which since he hath not done, we may safely and rationally conclude that he hath meant the same Thing by this Name, and those Titles with those from whom he did derive them; and consequently that the most certain way for us to understand what is the Sense of *Christ's* being *The Word*, is to consider what those *Jews* and *Gentiles* meant by it from whose

whose *Philosophy* it was first borrowed and derived.

3. That both the *Jewish* and *Gentile Theology* used this Phrase *The Word*, to signify a *Vital* and *Divine Subsistence*. For as for the *Jews*, it's plain that by *The Word* they meant the *Messias*; and therefore, *Pf. 110.* which they say contains the *Mysteries* of the *Messias*, the *Chaldee Paraphrase*, instead of the *Lord said unto my Lord*, read the *Lord said unto his Word*, that is consequently to his *Messias*. And *Rab. Arama* upon *Genesis*, explaining that Passage in the *107 Ps. 20.* *The Lord sent forth his Word, and they were healed*; expressly tells us, that by this *Word* is meant the *Messias*. And *Rab. Simeon* the Son of *Johni* expounding those Words of *Job 19. 26.* *Yet in my Flesh shall I see God*, faith, that the *Mercy* which proceeds from the highest *Wisdom* of *God*, shall be crowned by *The Word*, and take *Flesh* of a *Woman*; by which it's plain that by *The Word* he understood the *Messias*. And that by the *Messias* they understood a *Divine Subsistence*, is evident from sundry Places in the *Chaldee Paraphrase*; which often applies the Name *Jehovah* to the *Messias*; which according to the Opinion of the *Jews*, ought not to be imparted to any Creature; as particularly, *Isa. 28. 5.* *Jehovah Sabbaoth* (for so it is in the *Hebrew*) shall be a *Crown of Glory* unto the residue of his People; which those Interpreters understand concerning the *Messias*. So also *Isa. 18. 7.* *In that time shall the Present be brought unto the Lord of Hosts*; that is, say they, unto the *Messias*. So also, *Jerem. 33. 16.* By *Jehovah our Righteousness*, they understand the *Messias*; and by the Name of the *Everlasting*, *Moses Haderfan* understands the Name of the *Messias*, or *Anointed King*. And certainly had they not believed the *Messias* to be a *Divine Subsistence*, they would never have attributed

buted to him this incommunicable Name of God ; of which they had so high a Veneration, that they thought it too sacred for any Creature to name, and much more to assume. And the Commentary upon the fourth Psalm expressly saith, *Because the Gentiles cease not to ask us, Where is our God, the time will come that God will sit among the Righteous, so as they shall be able to point him out with the finger ;* which plainly refers to the Coming of the *Messias*. And so also the Septuagint change *Shaddai*, the undoubted Name of the Omnipotent God, into ΛΟΓΟΣ, *The Word*, Ezek. 1. 24. where, instead of the *Voice of God*, ( as it is in the Hebrew ) they read φωνὴ τοῦ λόγου, *the Voice of the Word of God*. And so also the afore-named Paraphrase, as I have already hinted, doth often use the *Word of God* for God himself, and that more especially with relation to the Creation of the World. Thus instead of *I made the Earth*, Isa. 45. 12. they read it, *I by my Word made the Earth* : And instead of *God made Man*, Gen. 1. 27. the Jerusalem Targum reads, *And the Word of the Lord made Man* : And instead of *They heard the Voice of the Lord*, Gen. 3. 8. the Paraphrase reads it, *And they heard the Voice of the Word of the Lord God*. And Philo expressly calls this Word the δεύτερον θεόν, or Second God next to the παλιόν των πάντων.

And as the Jews believed *The Word* to be a Divine Subsistence, so did the Gentiles also. For so Numenius the Pythagorean, as he is quoted by St. Cyril<sup>1</sup>, calls the Father the First, and the Word the Second God ; and Plotin tells us<sup>2</sup>, that this Word, or Image of God, beholdeth God, and is inseparably joined with him ;  
and

<sup>1</sup> Cyril cont. Julian. l. 8.

<sup>2</sup> Enn. 5. l. 1. c. 6.



and Porphyry, as he is cited by the fore-named Father<sup>1</sup>, tells us that the *Essence*

<sup>1</sup> Cyril. *ibid.* l. i. of God extends to Three In-beings, viz. the highest Good, which is the Father, and the Maker of all things, which is the Word, and the Soul of the World; and these he also calls the First, and Second, and Third God. And of Pythagoras Proclus the Platonist affirms, that he commended Three Gods together in ONE, (even as Plato also doth) the Second of which was the Word or Wisdom, whereunto he attributes the Creation of the World. And Plato, in his 6th Epistle, so far owns the Divinity of the Word, that he earnestly exhorts his Friends that they should ὑπομνῶσιν τῶν πάντων θεὸν ἡγμόνα τῶν τε ὄντων καὶ τῶν μελλόντων, ὅτε ἡγμὸν καὶ αἰῶνος πατέρα κύειον; that is, invoke God the Governour of all things that are and shall be, and also the Lord and Father of that Prince and Governour; by the first of which he evidently means

<sup>2</sup> Plat. *Epinom.* The Word, since 'tis to the Word that he elsewhere<sup>2</sup> attributes the Government of the Stars and Heavenly Bodies. By all which it is apparent, that by The Word they understood some Divine Subsistence, whose Nature is exalted above all finite Beings whatsoever; and therefore,

4. And lastly, Our Saviour, to whom this Phrase The Word is applied, must be that Divine Person or Subsistence. And so we find him stiled in the first Verse of this Chapter; In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. Which Expressions are so exactly agreeable to the Phrase of the Gentile Theology, that Amelius the Disciple of Plotin, and a great Enemy to

to the *Christians*, was forced to acknowledge that this is that *Word* which was from *Everlasting*, and by whom all things were made, as *Heraclitus* supposed: And, *per Jovem*, saith he, *Barbarus iste*, meaning *St. John*, *cum nostro Platone consentit*, *Verbum Dei in Ordine Principii esse* <sup>1</sup>.

This Barbarian is of our Plato's Mind, that the Word of God is ranked among the Principles. And

<sup>1</sup> St. Austin. De Civit. Dei. l. 10.

indeed, unless we understand this Place of the *Eternal Deity* of *The Word*, I know not how it will be possible to make any tolerable Sense of it; for if by *In the Beginning* here, we understand, as the *Socinians* would have us, in the *beginning of the Gospel* when *John Baptist* began to preach, the Words will imply a gross Tautology, and the Sense of them must be this; that *Christ* was when *John Baptist* preached that he was, or which is all one, that he was when he was. For how can it be worthy of an *Apostle* so solemnly to assert, that *the Word* had a *Being* in the *Beginning* of the *Gospel*, when we know the *Baptist* taught as much himself? who therefore came baptizing with water, that he should be made manifest to *Israel*, *Joh. 1. 31*. And when *St. Matthew* and *St. Luke*, who wrote before, taught us more than this, viz. That he was in being thirty Years before, when we are sure it was as true of any other then living as of *the Word*, even of *Judas* that betrayed him, and *Pilate* who condemned him. By *in the Beginning*, therefore must be meant the *Beginning* of the *World*; and that even then, *the Word* was with *God*, and *the Word* was *God*. So *Phil. 2. 6, 7*. *Who being in the form of God, thought it no robbery to be equal with God;*  
but

but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a Servant, and was made in the likeness of Men. From whence these three Conclusions do most naturally result; *First*, That *Christ* was in the form of a Servant as soon as he was made Man: *Secondly*, That he was in the form of God before he was in the form of a Servant: And, *Thirdly*, That he was in the form of God; that is, did as really and truly subsist in the *Divine Nature*, as in the form of a Servant, or in the Nature of Man. For the Words literally translated run thus; But emptied himself, taking the Form of a Servant, being in the Likeness of Men: Which plainly implies, that *Christ* was full before he emptied himself, that he emptied himself by taking the form of a Servant, that he took the form of a Servant by being made in the likeness of Men; which Emptying presupposes a precedent Plenituae, and which Plenitude consisted in being so in the form of God as to think it no Robbery to be equal with God. So *Rev.* 1. 11. he solemnly proclaims his own Divinity; *I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last*; which is the incommunicable Title by which God describes his own Being, and distinguishes it from all others. And *Isa.* 44. 6. *I am the first, and I am the last, and besides me there is no God.* These and many other plain Assertions there are in the *New Testament*, of the *Eternal Deity* of the *Blessed Word*. But since the *Eternal God* was constantly both by the *Jews* and *Gentiles*, signified by this Phrase *the Word*, there is no Reason to imagine that *St. John* should make use of it in any other Notion; since in so doing he would have imposed upon the World, and taken an effectual Course to make us believe that he meant what he never intended. And

And so I have done with the *first* Thing proposed, which was to shew you what is here meant by Christ's being *the Word*; the Design of which, you see is to express his *Eternal Godhead* and *Divinity*.

2. I now proceed to the *next* Thing proposed, which was to shew you for what Reason it is that he is here called *The Word*? In answer whereunto, it is to be considered that the Word ΛΟΓΟΣ hath a twofold Signification: *First*, It signifies *Reason*, which is the inferring *one* thing from *another*, and this is the Birth and Off-spring of the Mind. *Secondly*, It signifies *Speech*, which is an *audible* Expression of our Thoughts and Reasonings, and this is the Image and Interpreter of our Minds; and it is also the *Executer* of the Mind, especially in those who are in *Sovereign* Authority, and do rule by their Word and Command. Now our *Blessed Saviour* is called *the Word* upon both these Accounts, both as he is the *Reason*, and the *Speech* of God; and accordingly his being *the Word* denotes these four Things:

1<sup>st</sup>. His being *generated* of the Mind of the Father.

2<sup>dly</sup>. His being the *perfect* Image of that Mind.

3<sup>dly</sup>. His being the *Interpreter* of his Father's Mind to us.

4<sup>thly</sup>. His being the *Executer* of his Father's Mind.

1<sup>st</sup>. His being *generated* of the Mind of the Father, even as our *Word* or *Reason* is the Issue and Off-spring of our Minds. For it was the Opinion both of the *Jews* and *Gentiles*, that the *Eternal Word*  
is



is nothing else but that most perfect *Notion, Idea,* and *Conception* which *God* from the Beginning had formed of *himself*, and all other Beings in his own Mind. For thus the *Jews* tell us, that every thing below hath some Root above; which Roots, say they, are the *Sephiroth*, or Seals by which all these inferior Substances are stamp'd, and shaped, and fashioned; and these Seals, they tell us, are those most perfect *Ideas* of things which *God* did form in his own Mind, according to which he fashioned all the Beings that are in the World. For, say

<sup>1</sup> Vide Dr. Cudworth of the Union of Christ and the Church.

they, <sup>1</sup> all the Three Worlds, that is, the Rational, Sensitive, and Inanimate, were printed with the Print, and sealed with the same Seal; (that is, that great Seal in the Mind of *God*, consisting of the *Ideas* of all things) and that which is sealed, and receiveth the Sealing here below, is like to the Shape and Form of those things above which did seal and stamp the Signature upon them. And these three Worlds, say they, being one below another, *God* set upon them the Seal of *Sephiroth* so hard that he printed them quite through the Bottom of them, that is, he stamp'd them all into an exact Resemblance to those *Ideas* which he had formed of them in his own Mind. So that according to them, before *God* made the World he framed the *Idea* and *Model* of it in his own Understanding, which, together with that *Idea* or *Notion* which from all Eternity he conceived of himself, they called the  $\nu\omicron\rho\omicron\varsigma$ , or Eter-

<sup>2</sup> De Mundi Opif. p. 5.

nal Word of *God*. Hence *Philo* calls the Word of *God*, the  $\epsilon\iota\kappa\omicron\nu\alpha$   $\theta\epsilon\omicron$ , and also the  $\sigma\phi\epsilon\rho\alpha\iota\sigma\epsilon$ <sup>2</sup>, and the

the ἀρχέιυτον παράδειγμα, and the ἰδέα τῶν ἰδεῶν: And tells us, that as a City before it was made, existed only in the Mind of the Builder; so the World had no other Place, ἢ τὸν θεῶν λόγον; τὴν ταῦτα διακοσμήσαντα; that is, *than the Divine Word that made it.* And afterwards he tells us, that the *Intellectual World*, that is, the World which contains the *Ideas* of all things, ἔστιν ἢ θεῶν λόγον ἢ διὰ κοσμοποιῦντος;

<sup>1</sup> Ibid. p. 3.

*is nothing else but the Word of God now making the World.* And accordingly the Jews call *The Word* the Wisdom of God, and tell us<sup>1</sup>, that *this Wisdom is of the most inward Under-*

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 4.

*standing of God, who beholds himself in himself.* From all which it is apparent that the Jews at-

<sup>3</sup> Rab. Isaac Ben Schola on the last Verses of the 111 & 112 Psalms.

tributed the Original of this *Divine Word* to the Mind of the Father, it being, according to their Divinity nothing else but that most perfect Conception and Idea which God from Everlasting formed of himself, and all other Beings, in his own Mind. In which Opinion the most *Divine Philosophers* of the *Gentiles* also do most exactly consent. And hence they generally call *The Word* the *νῦν*, or Understanding of the Father, he being the perfect Idea or Conception by which the Father understands himself and all other things. And accordingly *Alcinous* tells us, that both *Socrates* and

*Plato* taught that God is a Mind, and that in the same there is a certain Idea which in respect of God, is that Knowledge which God hath of himself, and in

<sup>4</sup> Alcin de Doctrinâ Platonis.

respect of the World, is the Pattern or Mould thereof, and in respect of it self, is very Essence. And Plotin tells us<sup>1</sup>, that God is both the

<sup>1</sup>Plot Enn. 5.1.6.c.1. Party that is conceived in the Mind or Understanding, and also the Party that conceives him; and he makes The Word to be that which God doth mind in himself, which is Himself, and his own immense Perfections; and that the Nature of that Idea of himself which he beholds in himself is an Act that issues from him, which consists in beholding and minding of himself, and in beholding him becomes the self same thing with him. And this Understanding or Knowledge which God hath of himself, he calls<sup>2</sup>,

<sup>2</sup>Enn. 5.1.8.c.12. the Son of the Sovereign Father, & Enn. 5.1.1.c.7. that bears the like Resemblance to him, as the Light doth to the Sun in the Firmament. And, to name no more, Porphyry, as he is quoted by St. Cyril, tells us, That it was the Doctrine of Plato, that of the Good, (which elsewhere he calls the Father) is begotten an Understanding in a manner unknown to Men, in which are all things that truly are, and the Essences of all things that have a Being; that is, the substantial Ideas of God, and all created things whatsoever. And upon this account it is, that they call this Divine Subsistence The Word, because it was generated by the Mind of the Father, even as our Words are generated by our Minds. And accordingly the ancient Jews, and Christian Fathers, do generally expound that great Elogium of Wisdom, Prov. 8. concerning the Eternal Word; where it is said, that Wisdom was set up from everlasting, and possessed by God in the beginning of his way; that it was brought forth by him before

before the World; and that when he appointed the Foundations of the Earth, then was it by him, as one brought up with him, and was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him, v. 22.--- 31. And this Notion the New Testament doth plainly refer to when it calls Christ the Wisdom of God, 1 Cor. 1. 24. which is the same Title that both Jews and Platonists give to The Word upon the account of his being that Eternal Knowledge and Understanding which God hath of himself and all other Beings; and in this, John 1. 4. the Apostle seems plainly to hint this Notion to us; for speaking there of The Word, In him, saith he, was Life, and the Life was the Light of Men. Now I think it will be hard to give any natural Account how that Life that was in The Word should enlighten Men, unless we suppose his very Life and Being to consist in Knowledge and Understanding; for by the Light of Men here is plainly meant that Divine Knowledge which is revealed to the World by Christ; and this Divine Knowledge he tells us is the very Life of The Word, or the Life that was in The Word: And afterwards he expressly calls The Word the Light it self, from whence all our Knowledge of God and Goodness is derived, v. 9. which is exactly the same with what Philo saith of The Word, viz. that He is the Intellectual Sun that is altogether Light; and with what Plotin saith of the *vis*, or Divine Mind, that he is a Light shed forth every where, streaming from God, and begotten of him. Which is a plain Evidence of Christ's being the substantial Light, Knowledge, or Idea of all things which God from Everlasting formed in his own Mind, and of his being therefore called the Word of God, be-

Enn. 5. 1. 1.



cause he is the *Off-spring* of God's Understanding, even as our Reason is the *Off-spring* of ours.

2dly. He is called *The Word of God*, because he is the *perfect Image of God*, even as the Word is the Image of the Mind : For thus, as I have already told you, the *Eternal Word* is very frequently called the *Image of God* both by the Jews and Gen-

tiles. For so Plotin<sup>1</sup>, that this

<sup>1</sup> Enn. 5. l. 1. c. 6. *Divine Understanding, being the very Word of God, and Image of*

*God, everlastingly beholds God, and cannot be separated from him ; and<sup>2</sup> that it is the*

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. l. 2.

<sup>3</sup> Plato de Repub.

l. 6. p. 478.

*begotten Issue, Word, and Image of the Sovereign God. And Plato himself calls him<sup>3</sup> the begotten*

*Son of the Good, and most like unto him in all things ;*

the ἔργον τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ καὶ ὁμοιότατος ἑαυτῷ, and afterwards, τὸν τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ ἔργον ὃν τὰ ἀγαθὰ ἐξ ὧν ἐστὶν ἀνάλο-

γον ἑαυτῷ ; that is, *the begotten Son of the Good, who is most like unto himself.* And Rab. Moses the Son

of Neheman, as he is quoted by Masius, proving

that that *Angel of God's Presence* which went before

the Camp of Israel was the *Messias or Eternal Word*,

tells us, that he is therefore called the *Angel of*

*God's Presence, nimirum quia ille Angelus est facies*

*Dei ; because he is the Face of God, in whom God's*

*Face was to be seen.* And so Philo the Jew also doth

very frequently call *The Word*<sup>4</sup>,

the *Image and Resemblance of God*,

and the ἀπικρόνισμα, *the most per-*

*fect and exact Representation of God.* For they sup-

pose that God being Omniscient he must necessarily

know himself, and that knowing himself, neces-

sarily he must act *ad extremum Virium*, to the ut-

most.

most of his Power, even as all *other necessary* Agents do ; that acting to the utmost of his Power, he must by knowing himself produce as perfect an *Image, Idea, or Notion* of himself in his own Understanding as it was possible for him to do ; that it was possible for him to produce such a *vital and substantial Idea* of himself as is vested with all the *infinite* Perfections of his Nature ; and consequently that such an *Idea* he hath produced, and that this *Idea* is the *Eternal Word*. For *God* can do whatsoever doth not imply a Contradiction ; now there is nothing in *God* but what he can communicate without a Contradiction, but only *Self-Existence* ; that implies a Contradiction indeed, for *God* to cause *another* thing to be without any Cause, and to exist of it self. But as for all his *other* Perfections he may communicate them ; and when he acts necessarily, as he is supposed to do in the Generation of *the Word*, he must, because then he acts to his utmost Possibility. So then *The Word* must have the same *Nature, Essence, and Perfections* with the *Father* ; and the only *imaginable* Difference between them must be this ; that whereas the *Father* exists of himself, *the Word* exists of the *Father* ; which is exactly agreeable to the *Catholick Notion* of *Christians*. And indeed if it be granted that *God*, who is infinitely *knowing*, must necessarily know himself perfectly, then it will seem to follow, that there must be the *same* Perfections in that *Idea* or *Notion* by which he knows *himself*, that there are in himself ; for else it is not one *perfect Idea* of him. And hence it is that our *Notions* do so imperfectly *resemble* things, because we cannot communicate to them that *Life* and *Substance* that is in the things

themselves; and therefore if God knows himself perfectly, as he must needs do being infinitely knowing, he must communicate *Life* and *Substance* to the Notion of himself, or else 'twill be no perfect Notion of his Life and Substance; and he must communicate to it all the immense Perfections of his own Nature, or else 'twill be no perfect Notion of his own Perfections. So then the *Eternal Word*, which is here supposed to be the most perfect Notion of the *Father*, must be a vital and substantial Idea, endued with all the Perfections of the *Divine Nature*, which is also very agreeable with the *Christian* Notion of the *Divine Word*: For he is described to be the *Image of God*, 2 Cor. 4. 4. the *Brightness of his Glory*, and the express *Character of his Person*, Heb. 1. 3. and being so he must necessarily be what God is, i. e. God essential, or else he cannot be the perfect Image, and express Character of God. And accordingly in the *New Testament* he is called God over all, blessed for ever, Rom. 9. 5. and the Perfections of the *Divine Nature* are very frequently attributed to him; as particularly *Omniscience*, John 16. 30. *Eternity*, Heb. 1. 12. and Rev. 22. 13. *I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last*. So that upon this Account also he may very properly be called *The Word of God*, because as our Words are the Images of our Minds, so He is the most perfect Image of God.

3dly. He is called *The Word*, because he is the Interpreter of the Father's Mind, even as our Words also are the Interpreters of our Minds to others. And this Philo the Jew doth also take notice of as the proper Work and Office of *The Word* to be *φραστικὸς τῷ νοῦ τῷ θεῷ καὶ τῷ κόσμῳ*,  
 ὡς ἡμεῖς,

ἑπὶ τοὺς ἰσχυροὺς, the Ambassador of the Great King to his Subjects, to communicate his Mind and Will to them; and also the Angel and

<sup>1</sup> Quis rer. div. hæc. p. 397.

Messenger of God to Men to declare his Will and Pleasure to them: And that in the Execution of this Office he doth τοῖς μὲν ὡς βασιλεὺς ἃ καὶ παρὰ τὴν ἐξουσίαν αὐτοῦ παρέρχεται, &c. <sup>2</sup>

Some as a King he commands what they shall do, others as a School-Master he profitably instructs, others as a Counsellor he faithfully admonishes; all which he performs as the Interpreter of the Mind of God. And elsewhere he calls him the θεοτοκὸν ἥλιον <sup>3</sup>,

<sup>2</sup> De Somn. p. 461.

the Divine Sun that enlightens the Souls of Men; and elsewhere he

<sup>3</sup> De Charitate, p. 552.

expressly calls him the Interpreter of the Mind of God to Men: So that it seems it was upon this Account as well as others, that He was called by the Ancients, The Word of God. And the same Account is given of it in the New Testament. So Joh. 1. 18. No Man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him. Where there is a particular Reason assigned, why though other Men interpreted the Mind of God to us, yet Christ alone is called The Word of God; because he only was the immediate Interpreter of the Divine Will, even as the Word which we speak is of ours. For he was in the very Bosom of the Father, and there understood his Mind not by the Instructions of an Angel, nor by Dreams and Visions, nor only by the Holy Ghost, but by an immediate Intuition of his Thoughts and Purposes which from all Eternity



were exposed to his View and Prospect. For as *St. Gregory Nazianzen* hath observed, He had the *same* Relation to the Father, as the *inward* Thought hath to the Mind, because of his *intimate* Conjunction with him, and Power to declare him to the World. For the *Father* is known by the *Son*, who is a *brief* and *easy* Demonstration of the *Father*, as every thing that is begotten is *σιωπῶν λόγος*, the *silent Word* of that which doth beget it.

4thly. And lastly, He is called *The Word*, because he is the *Executor* of his Father's Will, even as the Word and Command of a King is the *Executor* of his Will and Pleasure: For according to the Sense of the *Ancients*, God hath from the very Beginning governed the World by his *eternal* ΛΟΓΟΣ, whom they therefore call the *Immortal King*, the *Governor* of all things that are or shall be, and the *Vice-Roy* of the great God, as I have already shewed you at large. And 'twas by this *Word* that God executed his Will when he made the World; For by his *Word* he made the *Heavens*, and all the *Host* of them, by the *Breath* of his Mouth, *Psal.* 33. 6. He did but say the *Word*, *Let there be Light*, and there was *Light*; and to his *powerful* and *efficacious* *Fiat* the whole Frame of Nature was but a *real* *Eccho*. For these Expressions, *Let there be Light*, and *let there be a Firmament*, &c. are not perhaps so to be understood as if God did actually pronounce those Syllables, but they rather seem to be a *popular* Description of the *infinite* Energy of the *Eternal Word* by which God made the *Heavens* and the *Earth*, to whom it was as easy to give Being to the World as it was to command it to be; and that Passage of the Psalmist, *by the Word of the Lord were*  
the

*the Heavens made*, and of the Author to the *Hebrews*, *Heb.* 11. 3. that *the Worlds were framed by the Word of God*, seem rather to denote that powerful Act of Creation which was exerted by the *vital and substantial Word of God*, whereby he instantly, and as it were with a Words speaking, gave *Existence* to those Beings he intended to create, than any *articulate Words or Phrases* pronounced by God himself; because in this Chapter, and many other Places of the *New Testament*, it is expressly said that *God made the World by Christ*, who is that *living and substantial Word* that was with *God* from the Beginning. Well therefore may *Christ* be called *The Word of God*, since by him *God* doth as effectually execute his Will, as if it were done by the Word of his own Mouth. For *Christ* hath such Power both in *Heaven and Earth*, that at his Word and Command all things are presently done according to his Will; and therefore you may observe in that *Vision* to *St. John*, *Rev.* 19. 13. *Jesus*, being represented as the *King of Kings*, and *Lord of Lords*, clothed in a royal Purple Robe, is called by the name of *the Word of God*, when he was executing the *Divine Vengeance* upon the *Nations* by that Power which he hath at *God's Right-hand*.

3. I now pass on to the *third and last Thing*, namely, what we are to understand by *the Word's being made Flesh*? of which I shall give you a *brief Account*, and then conclude with a few short Inferences from the whole. Which Words, *being made Flesh*, we ought not so to understand as if the *Eternal Word* was changed or converted into *Flesh*, as *Cerinthus* taught; or as if the *Flesh* was changed or converted

converted into the *Word*, as *Valentinus* ridiculously asserted ; for the *Deity* is *immutable*, and as it can be changed into *nothing*, so *nothing* can be changed into it. But by *Flesh* we are to understand *Man*, a *Part* being put for the *Whole* ; for so the *Scripture* doth very frequently call *Man* *Flesh*, that being *one* of the *Ingredients* of his *Nature*. Thus *Pf.* 56. 4. *I will not fear what flesh can do unto me*, *Jerem.* 17. 5. *Cursed be the Man that maketh flesh his arm*, that is that puts his *Confidence* in *Man* : *Matth.* 24. 22. *Except those days be shortned, no flesh shall be saved* ; that is, no *Man* : And *Rom.* 3. 20. *No flesh shall be justified in his sight*, that is, no *Man* shall be justified. So here, *The Word was made flesh*, that is *The Word* was made *Man*. Not that the *Divine Nature* was converted into the *Nature* of *Man*, but the *Meaning* is, it was made *one* with *Man*, even as our *Soul* is not turned into nor confounded with the *Body*, yet they *two*, though *distinct* in *Natures*, grow into one *Man* ; so the *Manhood* of *Christ* was assumed, or taken into *The Word*, both being united into *one* *Person*, the *Natures* being preserved *entire* and *distinct*, without any *Mixture* or *Confusion*. For as the *Fourth General Council* hath defined it, *He was so made Flesh that he ceased not to be the Word, never changing that he was, but assuming that which he was not*. And though our *Humanity* was advanced by it, yet his *Divinity* was not at all diminished ; and the *Mystery* of *Godliness*, *God manifested in the flesh*, was no *Detriment* to the *Godhead*, which is always *unchangeably* the same : And therefore the *seeming* *Harshness* of this *Expression* may be easily mollified by comparing it with others of the same import ; for elsewhere

where it is said, that *he was manifest in the flesh*; 1 Tim. 3. 16. which only denotes that the *Divinity* was made known, and did appear in the World in a *Humane Nature*. Elsewhere it is said, that *he took on him the Nature of Man*, Heb. 2. 16. which only denotes that the *Divinity* did assume the *Humane Nature* to it, and was personally united with it. So here *The Word was made flesh*; that is, *The Word* was made one with the *Flesh* by assuming the *Humane Nature* into a *personal Union* with it self.

Having thus explain'd to you the Sense and Meaning of the Words, I shall now conclude this Argument with *three or four short Inferences* from the whole.

1. From hence we may infer the *Eternal Divinity* of our *Blessed Saviour*, even from this great name *The Word*, that is here attributed to him. For since it is so apparent that this Phrase is a *Term of Art* derived from the *Schools* of the *Jews* and *Gentiles*, and since by it they did all so generally understand a *Divine Person* subsisting from all *Eternity*, it must necessarily follow that the *Holy Ghost*, deriving it from them and applying it to our *Blessed Saviour*, must use it to the *same Sense*; for otherwise He were better never to have used it at all, because by discoursing in the *same Language* with them, he will give us *just occasion* to think that he means the *same thing*, namely, that *Christ*, whom he calls *The Word*, is a *Divine Person* subsisting from all *Eternity*; which if he doth not mean by using that Term, he will almost necessarily betray us into a *false Belief* concerning our *Saviour*. As, to instance briefly in a Case of another Nature;



ture; Our *Saviour* in his Sermons doth frequently press us to *Meekness*, and *Patience*, *Humility* and *Charity*, all which are *Terms* frequently used long before in the *Moral Philosophy* both of the *Jews* and *Gentiles*, by which they signify such and such *particular* Virtues. Since therefore our *Saviour* doth use the *same* Terms with them, we have *just* Reason to conclude that he means the *same* Virtues by them; and should he mean any thing else, his very using of these Terms would necessarily impose upon us a *false* Sense of his meaning; for how should we understand his Meaning but by his Words, and how should we understand his Words but by the *common* Import and Signification of them? And can we imagine that the *Spirit of Truth* would have ever described our *Saviour* by a Term that was so generally used to signify a *Divine Person* subsisting from all *Eternity*, and used it too, as he doth, without any Restraint or Limitation, nay and so seemingly at least to the *same* Purpose, as he doth in the *three first Verses* of this Chapter, where he describes the *Divine Nature* and *Operations* of *Christ The Word*, in the same terms in which the *Jews* and *Gentiles* were wont to describe the *Divinity* of their ΛΟΓΟΣ; can we imagine, I say, that the *Holy Spirit* would have done thus, had he known *Christ* to be nothing but a *meer* Man that never was before he was born of his Mother? Far be it from us to charge that *Blessed Spirit* with imposing such a Delusion upon Mankind.

2. Hence I infer the *astonishing* Love of our *Blessed Saviour* in condescending so low as to be made *Flesh* for us, and assume our Nature. For what he was before he took our Nature, you have heard already:

already : He was no *less* than the *Eternal Word* of the Father ; in whose Bosom he enjoyed the *supremest* Degree of Bliss and Happiness, being crowned with Glory, and incircled about with the *Essential* Rays of the *Divinity*. And yet such was his Love to *poor* Mortals, so *infinite* was his Zeal and Concern for our Happiness, that, seeing the Misery we were plunged into, he could not rest, no not in the *blessed* Arms of his Father, but strip himself of all his Majesty and Bliss, and comes down among us, and assumes our Nature to save and rescue us, and invite and lead us to those *Heavenly* Mansions from whence he descended to us. Lord, what a *Prodigy* of Love was here, as doth not only puzzle my Conceit, but *out-reach* my Wonder and Admiration ! For when I seriously consider it, though it be a Blessing beyond all my Hopes, and such as I could never have had the Impudence to desire ; yet it fills my Mind with an *awful* Horror to think that there was a Time when the *great* God was here upon the Earth in my Form and Nature, and conversed familiarly with such *mortal* Wights as my self, and for my sake, and such *poor* Worms as I, patiently underwent the *common* Infirmities of Men, and willingly exposed himself to the Contempt and Scorn of a *malevolent* World, and the Malice and Cruelty of those *barbarous* Men to whom he gave Being, and could with the Breath of his Nostrils have scattered into *Atoms*, and all this in *meer* Compassion to a Company of *apostatized* Natures, who had so highly deserved to be thrown from his Care and Mercy for ever. O my Soul, how am I astonished at this *Miracle* of Love ! Methinks when I consider it I am looking  
down

down from a *stupendous* Precipice, whose Height fills me with a *trembling* Horror, and even over-setting Reason.

3. From hence I infer what *mighty* Obligations we have *for ever* to love and serve our *Blessed Redeemer*. If our Hearts are capable of being warmed into *any* degree of Affection, sure 'tis impossible but we must be affected at such an *unheard* of Instance of Love. For the *Son of God* to leave his Father's Bosom, where he was infinitely more *happy* than we can express and think of, and disguise himself in *mortal* Flesh, and become a *Man of Sorrows* that he might make me a *Man of endless Joys*: can my Heart hold when I think of this? Is it possible I should reflect upon such a *prodigious* Instance of Affection without being wrapt into an *Extasy* of Love? *Blessed Jesus*, what *barbarous* Hearts do we carry about with us, that will not melt before the Flames of thy Love! Flames that are sufficient to kindle *Seraphims*, and to fill all *reasonable* Breasts with *burning* Affections towards thee! For how is it Possible that any *Man*, I had almost said that any *Devil*, should be so *disingenuous* and *ill-natured* as not to be affected with such *stupendous* Kindness? When we see a Child slight his *careful* and *indulgent* Parents, we are ready to account him an *unnatural* Monster; when we see a Man neglect his Friend, or disregard his Benefactor, we presently call him *base* and *ungrateful*; nay when we see one abuse a *poor brute* Creature that fawns upon him, and expresses its Kindness to him, we look upon it as an *undoubted* Sign of a very *hard* Heart, and an *ill* Nature: What Term then can we find in all the *World of Words* that is

*odious*

odious enough to express our Disaffection to our Blessed Redeemer, to whom we are so infinitely obliged? *Base, Disingenuous, Ill-natured, and Ungrateful*, are all too soft; 'tis something beyond *Barbarous and Devilish*. For one would think that neither the most *inhumane Canibal on Earth*, nor the *blackest Devil in Hell*, could ever be guilty of so foul a Crime, which hath something in it too monstrous for any Words to express. Well therefore may the *Heavens* be astonished, and the *Earth* tremble, and all the Creation of *God* stand amazed at us, to see how *insensible* we are of this most ravishing and endearing Love. Well may we be amazed at our selves, and wonder at our own Stupidity to think that the *Son of God* should be so kind as to come down from *Heaven* to visit us, to leave the Habitation of his Glory, and shroud his *Divinity* in mortal *Flesh*, and make himself a miserable Wight, meerly that he might make us happy, and advance us to that Glory and Bliss which for our sakes he willingly abandoned; and yet that we are no more touched and affected with it, than with the most *indifferent* Thing in the World. *Blessed God*, what are we made of? What kind of Souls do we carry about with us, that no Kindness will oblige us, no not the most *endearing* that ever was known or heard of? Doubtless should any Man have shewn us but half this Kindness, should a *Friend* but offer to die for us, or a *Prince* to descend from his Throne, and put himself into the State of a *Beggar* to enrich and advance us in the World, we should have thought our selves bound to him as long as we lived; and should we have thought any Services too much, any Requi-

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tals too *dear* for him, we should have been lookt upon as *Monsters* of Ingratitude, as the Reproaches and Scandals of *humane* Nature, and been hiss'd out of all Society for a Company of *infamous* Villains, *unworthy* of the *least* Respect or Favour from Mankind. But for a *Friend* to die, or a *Prince* to become a *Beggar* for our sakes, alas what *poor inconsiderable* Things are they, compared with the Condescensions of the *Son of God*, who humbled himself much *lower* in becoming a Man than the most *glorious* Angel in *Heaven* could have done in assuming the Nature of a Worm. And can we be so *inhumane* as not to be moved by such a Miracle of *condescending* Love? Is it the less, because it is the Love of God, or doth it less deserve our Requital? What Excuse then can we make for our *wretched* Insensibility? *O ungrateful* that we are! with what Confidence can we shew our Heads among *reasonable* Beings after we have so barbarously slighted our *best* Friend, and behaved our selves so disingenuously towards our *greatest* Benefactor? How can we pretend to any thing that is *modest* or *ingenuous*, *tender* or *apprehensive* in *humane* Nature, when nothing will oblige us, no not that *astounding* Love that made the *Son of God* leave all his Glory, and become a *poor miserable* Mortal for our sakes? *O blessed Jesus!* what do thy *holy Angels* think of us! how do thy *blessed Saints* resent our Unkindness towards thee! yea, how justly will the Devils themselves reproach and upbraid our Baseness, who, *bad* as they are, were never so much Devils yet as to spurn the Love of a Redeemer, coming down from *Heaven* to die and suffer for their sakes! Wherefore as we would not be hiss'd

at by all the *reasonable* World, and become Spectacles of Horror to *God*, and *Angels*, and *Devils*, let us endeavour to affect our selves with the Love of our *Redeemer*, and to inflame *our own* Souls with the Sense of his Kindness, who hath done such *mighty* things to endear and oblige us.

4. From hence I infer what *monstrous* Disingenuity it would be in us to think much of *parting* with any thing, or *doing* any thing for the sake of *Christ*, who for our sakes parted with his Father's Bosom, and all those *infinite* Delights which he there enjoyed, and united himself to our *miserable* Nature that he might make us *good* and *happy* for ever. And now after all this, with what Conscience or Modesty can we grudge to do any thing which he shall require at our hands? Should he command me to descend into the *lowest* Form of Beings, and to become the most *wretched* and *contemprible* of all Animals, could I be such a *Calist* as to deny him, who descended much *lower* for the sake of me? Should he remand me back into *Non-entity*, and bid me cease to be *for ever*; alas! the Distance is nothing so *great* between me and *nothing*, as 'twas betwixt him, and that *humane* Nature which he assumed for my sake. Should he require me to die for him under all those *lingering* and *exquisite* Tortures which the *blessed Martyrs* suffered for his Name, what Proportion were there between what he requires of me, and what he hath done for me? He only requires that I should pass through *Death* to *Heaven* for him, but he came from *Heaven* to pass through *Death* for me; so that for his sake I should only put off a *wretched* Garment of *Flesh*, that I may be inrobed

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with Glory and Immortality ; but for my sake he put off his Robes of Glory and Majesty, that he might wear my *frail* and *mortal* Flesh, and therein reconcile me to *God*, and make me everlastingly *happy* : And when I may advance my self into an Equality with *Angels* by suffering the Agonies of a *miserable* Death for him, shall I refuse, or think much of it ; when he who was *equal with God* in Glory and Happiness, was so ready to be born a *wretched miserable* Man for me ? Should he require me to give my Substance to the *Poor*, and leave my self *destitute* of all Supplies and Comforts ; could I deny so *poor* a Request to *him*, who forsook a *Heaven* of *Infinite* Pleasures for my sake, and exposed himself *naked* to the Mercy of a *wretched, wicked, and ill-natured* World, from whom he could expect nothing but the most *barbarous* Contempt and Cruelty ? Sure, one would think 'twere impossible for any *reasonable* Being to deny such *poor*, such *inconsiderable* Boons to such a *great* and *deserving* Benefactor ; and yet these are much more than what he ordinarily requires at our hands. For that which he ordinarily requires of us is, that we would forsake those *Vices* which are as *injurious* to us as they are *hateful* to *him*, and which are therefore *hateful* to him, because they are our Enemies ; and that we would practise those *Virtues* in which the Perfection and Happiness of our Nature is involved, and which we can no more be *happy* without, then we can be without Being. And can I think much to part with those Lusts for his sake, which are my Shames and Infelicities, who never grudg'd to part with *Heaven* for *mine* ? Can they be as *dear* to me as his Father's Bosom was

to

to him? and yet he left *that* for Love of *me*; and shall not I leave *these* for Love of him? Methinks if we will not part with them for *our own* sakes, as being *destructive* to our Peace and Happiness; yet had we the *least* spark of Ingenuity in us, we should gladly part with them for the sake of our Saviour, who for *ours* was so ready to part with all that was *dear* to him. Can we be such Wretches as to refuse to serve him, when he requires nothing of us but what we are obliged to by *our own* Interest? Are we so *lost* to all that is *ingenuous* and *modest*, that we will not obey him when he only requires us to be kind to *our selves*? O wretched Mortals! doth his Coming down from *Heaven* to save you, deserve this *barbarous* Treatment at your hands, that to spite him you should injure *your selves*, and wound his Authority thro' *your own* Sides? Had he been wholly *indifferent* to you, it had been very *unreasonable* to reject his Service when it altogether consists in serving your selves; but to disobey so *dear* a Friend, to whom we are obliged by such *stupendous* Favours, when he enjoins us nothing but the Means of *our own* Happiness, is such a Piece of *monstrous* and *unnatural* Baseness, as the *Devil* himself can hardly parallel. O unkind that we are! that we will not be *good* to our selves for our Saviour's sake, and that when he conjures us to it, as he doth, even by all the Love that we owe him! For so *John* 14. 15. *If ye love me, saith he, keep my Commandments; Consider what mighty things I have done for you; how I left my Throne in Heaven for your sakes, and became a miserable mortal Man: And now that I am going from you, and am offering up my Life to redeem you, if ever I have*



merited any Love at your hands, express it in keeping my Commandments. 'Tis no great matter that I require of you, 'tis only that you would be kind to your selves, that you would let Misery alone, and endeavour to be as happy as Heaven can make you. This is all the Requital that I expect at your hands, that you would be as good and happy as I would have you; and this, which is the sum of all my Commands, I conjure you strictly to observe, even by all the Love that you owe me. O blessed Jesus! one would have thought thou hadst been requiring some mighty Trial of our Love to thee, that we should do some great Thing for thee to which nothing could prompt us but only our Gratitude and Kindness: But when thou only requirest us to express our Love to thee in doing that which is the highest Expression of our Love to *our selves*, can we be so *disingenuous* as not to do that for *thy* sake to whom we are so infinitely obliged, which we are bound to do for *our own* sakes as well as thine?

5. And lastly; Hence I infer what a *glorious* Thing it is to do *Good*, since the *Son of God*, having so great an Opportunity of doing *Good* to the World, thought it worth his While to come down from *Heaven*, and assume our Natures, and undergo our Miseries, as if he esteemed it more *glorious* and *becoming* the Majesty and Divinity of his Person to dwell upon Earth with *poor miserable* Mortals, among whom he might do the *greatest Good*, than to sit *above* upon the Throne of *Heaven*, and receive the most *humble* Adorations of *Angels*; for 'twas only for an Opportunity of doing the *greatest Good* that he exchanged the Glory and Happiness of *Heaven*, chusing rather to become a  
*miserable*

miserable Man to make others good and happy, than to continue among those infinite Delights with which the *Heavenly State* abounds. What a most glorious Thing then is it to do Good, when our most wise Redeemer chose it before *Heaven* it self, when he thought it more eligible to come down upon *Earth* and make us happy, than to dwell in the Bosom of his Father, and shine in *Heaven* with the Brightness and Glory of his Divinity. And if there be nothing in *Heaven* so glorious as doing Good, what is there upon *Earth* that may be compared unto it? What dim, what sullied Things are all the *Pomps* and *Splendors* of this World compared with the Glory of doing Good to others, when God preferred it before *Heaven* it self? To conquer Kingdoms, to lead the World in Triumph after us, how mean and inconsiderable are they compared with that Glory which the Son of God forsook meerly to do Good to the World? A Thing which he esteemed so great and illustrious, that he did not only leave *Heaven* for it, but scorned and despised the Kingdoms of the *Earth*, finding nothing below that was worthy of him but only to go about doing Good! For this was his constant Imployment, as you may see *Acts* 10. 21. And now is it possible that after this great Example, we should think Beneficence a cheap or vulgar Thing? Can we think it a Dishonour to stoop to the meanest Offices, whereby we may serve the Souls or Bodies of our Brethren, when the Son of God came down from *Heaven*, and veiled his Glory in mortal Flesh for no other End but to do Good? O foolish Creatures that we are! did we but understand and consider what a magnificent Thing it is to supply

the Necessities of Men, and contribute to their Happiness, we should doubtless embrace it as our *greatest* Preferment, and think our selves bound to bless God *for ever* for furnishing us with Occasions of doing *Good*, that he doth deem us worthy of such an *illustrious* Imployment, to have some share with himself in the Glory of it, that he will vouchsafe to us an Opportunity to *honour* and *magnify* our selves by acting this *Divine*, this *Godlike* Part in the World. Never then let us think that we dishonour our selves, though we stoop *never* so low, when it is to do *Good*; no, though it be to *visit* a Beggar, to *dress* the Sores of a *poor Lazar*, to *instruct* or *comfort* the *meanest* Wretch in all thy Neighbourhood. For now thou actest the Part of *God* in doing the most *glorious* Thing in all the World; a Thing for which the *greatest* Princes may envy thee, and the *blessed God* for ever applaud thee! Now thou art doing that which the *Son of God* came down from *Heaven* to do, and which he thought more worthy of his Choice than to reign over *Angels* in *Heaven*: So that either we must say, that He was *unwise* for preferring it before *Heaven*, or else we must acknowledge that we are infinitely *foolish* in preferring any Thing in the World before it.

II. I now proceed to the *Second Proposition*, *And dwelt among us full of Grace and Truth*. For that these *later Words* [ *full of Grace and Truth* ] belong to the *former*, [ *And dwelt among us* ] you may plainly see by the *Parenthesis* in your Bible, by which they are interrupted and broken off from one another. In the Explication of these Words, I shall do these *Two Things* :

1. En-

1. Enquire what is here meant by the *Word's dwelling among us*.

2. What we are to understand by his being full of *Grace and Truth*.

1. What is here meant by the *Word's dwelling among us*? In the *Greek* it is ἐσκήνωσεν ἐν ἡμῖν; that is, he pitched his Tabernacle among us; which seems plainly to refer to God's dwelling in the Tabernacle under the *Mosaic Law*. For the *Greek* word σκηνώω comes immediately from the *Hebrew* *Shacan*, and differs from it only by the *Greek* Termination; and from *Shacan* comes the word *Shechinah*, by which the *Hebrews* were wont to express God's glorious Presence upon Earth, and especially his Habitation in the *holy Tabernacle* between the two *Cherubims*, where he is said to dwell, 1 Sam. 4. 4. and 2 Sam. 6. 2. because from thence God was wont to speak, and discover himself by a visible Brightness and Glory: And accordingly this Presence, or Habitation of God, is called in the *Greek* δόξα and ἐμφάνεια, *Glory* and *Appearing*. Thus *Numb.* 16. 19. it is said, that when the *Congregation* drew near to the Tabernacle, the *Glory of the Lord* appeared unto them; and *v.* 42. it is said, that a *Cloud* covered the Tabernacle, and the *Glory of the Lord* appeared. So when the *Glory* is said to be departed from *Israel*, 1 Sam. 4. 21. it's plain that by that *Glory* is meant this visible Appearance of God in a glorious Brightness from between the *Cherubims*. So *Rev.* 21. when it had been said of the *New Jerusalem*, that it was σκηνή, the Tabernacle of God with us, *v.* 3. that being re-



peated again, v. 11. is said to have the *Glory of God* in it, and the *Glory of God* to enlighten it, v. 23. Now it seems most probable that this glorious *Shechinah*, Presence, or Habitation of God, consisted in the Presence of Angels; who being the *Courtiers of Heaven*, where they appear there God is said to be peculiarly present. And hence it is that the Well *Labi-roi*, where the *Angel* appeared to *Hagar*, Gen. 16. 7, 14. is by the *Jerusalem Targum*, stiled the Well *ubi manifestata illi fuit Præsentia Domini Majestatica*, where the Presence of God in Majesty was manifested to her: And that visible *Glory* which appeared from between the *Cherubims*, is called by the same name viz, the *Gloria Majestatica præsentia Domini*, the *Glory of the Majestatick Presence of God*; which is a plain Evidence that the *Jews* believed the *Majestatick Presence of God* to be nothing else but the Appearance of Angels. And of the same Mind was the *Author* to the *Hebrews*, Heb. 2. 2. For the *Law*, saith he was spoken by Angels; and so *St. Stephen*, Acts 7. 53. The *Law* was received by the Disposition of Angels; and *St. Paul*, that the *Law* was ordained by Angels in the hand of a Mediator, Galat. 3. 19. Whereas *Exod. 19. 11.* compared with 20. v. 22. it is said, that the *Lord* came down in the sight of all the *People*, and talked with them; that is, as you will there find, he spoke the *Law* to them. Which is a plain Evidence that that glorious Descent of God's Presence upon *Mount Sinai*, where the *Law* was spoken, was in the Opinion of the *Author* to the *Hebrews*, nothing but the Presence of Angels; who when they were to represent the *Divine Presence*, were wont to appear in bright and radiant Bodies; and

and therefore where it is said in *Isaiah's* Vision, *Isa. 6. 1.* that he saw the Lord sitting upon a Throne, and that his Train filled the Temple; that is, his Train of Angels; and this Train of Angels our Saviour calls the Glory of the Lord, *Joh. 12. 41.* which is the same with the *Shechinah*, or *Majestick Presence*: And therefore perhaps they are called *Angels of Light* in reference to that *lucid, shining, flaming* Appearance which they were wont to make: And in *Pf. 104. 4.* God is said to make his Ministers a flaming fire, that is, when they are to make a visible Representation of his *Majestick Presence* to Mankind. But besides this, *Isa. 63. 9.* you have mention made of the *Angel of God's Presence* which saved Israel; which seems to denote the *Head and Chief* of those Angels, which by their glorious Appearances did represent God to Mankind. By which Angel the Jews did generally understand the *Messias*, or *Eternal Word*: For so *Philo*, speaking of God's committing the Care of his Flock to his first born Son, *The Word*, tells us, *That this is that Angel whom God promised to send before the Camp of Israel, even the Angel of his Presence.* And so also *Rab. Menahem* upon the 14th of *Exod. 19.* tells us, that the Angel which went before the Camp of Israel was *Shechinah*, the Presence, or Majesty of God, and that he is called the Angel or Prince of the World, because the Government of the World is in his hands. And to the same Purpose *Moses the Son of Neheman*, *Praeterea Scriptum est*, saith he, & *Angelus faciei ejus salvos fecit ipsos*, &c. that is, It is written, the Angel of his Presence shall save them, viz. that Angel which is the Presence of God, of whom it is said, *My Presence shall go before thee, and I will*  
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cause thee to rest. Moreover, saith he, *this is that Angel of whom the Prophets foretold, The Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to his Temple, the Angel of the Covenant whom ye desire*; which both the Ancient Jews and Christians interpret to be the *Messias*; and this, saith he, is *He who governs the World, that brought the Children of Israel out of Egypt, and to whom the most High God communicates his own Name*. And this without doubt was he whom God calls his *Presence* when he promised *Moses*, that his *Presence* should go along with him, *Exod. 33. 14.* for this *Presence* is there said to be the *Angel of God*; both which put together make him to be the *Angel of God's Presence*, *Exod. 23. 20.* And accordingly instead of, *Say not before the Angel of the Lord*, *Eccles. 5. 6.* the *Septuagint* render it, *Say not before the Presence of God*, that is, before the *Angel of his Presence*. And since to this *Angel of his Presence*, God doth attribute not only his *Prerogative of Forgiving Sins*, but also his *own Name*, as you may see he doth, *Exod. 23. 21.* it seems very probable, what not only the *Jews*, but many very *Learned Christians* do assert, that it was no created *Angel*, but the *Eternal Word* or *Messias*: For saith God to *Moses*, *Behold I send an Angel before thee, &c. beware of him, and obey his Voice; provoke him not, for he will not pardon your Transgressions, for my Name is in him*; that is, my Name *Jehovah*, which is the proper and incommunicable Name of God. And accordingly you frequently read of an *Angel* that is called by the Name *Jehovah*, which I doubt not was the same with this *Angel of God's Presence*. Thus that *Angel of the Lord* which appeared to *Moses* in the *burning Bush*, is called by the Name *Jehovah*, and stiled the *God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*,

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*Jacob, Exod. 3. 2. comp. 4. 5. And one of those Angels that appeared to Abraham in the Plains of Mamre, is called the Lord, and the Judge of all the Earth, Gen. 18. 1, 25. So also he that stood on the top of the Ladder in Jacob's Vision, is in Gen. 28. 13. called the Lord God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac; whereas in Gen. 31. 11. he is called the Angel of the Lord, and afterwards, v. 13. the God of Bethel. Which seems to me a plain Evidence that that Angel of God was God, since both those Titles were attributed to the same Person; and that he was also that very Angel of his Presence whom God promised to send before the Camp of Israel, since in him it is apparent the Name of God was, i. e. the Name Jehovah. And it's very observable, that this very Angel both Philo and the Chaldee Paraphrase styles the Word of God; and therefore those Words of God to Joshua, Jos. 1. 5. As I was with Moses, so I will be with thee, the Paraphrase renders thus, As my Word was assisting to Moses, so it shall be assisting to thee: And 'tis the Observation of the Learned Masius, that generally where the Hebrew Text speaks of God either conversing with Men, or managing their Affairs, that Paraphrase, instead of God, uses this Phrase the Word of God. From whence it is evident, that it was the received Doctrine of the Jews that God was always present with Mankind by his Eternal Word; which is therefore the more considerable, because it so exactly agrees with the Doctrine of the Primitive Fathers. For so Tertullian, Christus semper egit in Dei Patris nomine; ipse ad initio conversatus est cum Patriarchis & Prophetis. And in his Book against Praxian he tells us, That from Adam to the Patriarchs and Prophets, Christ al-*  
*ways*



ways descended to discourse with Men; and that that God who conversed upon Earth with Men, was no other than that Eternal Word that was to be made Flesh. And the same Thing is strenuously asserted also by *Justin Martyr* in his Discourses with *Trypho the Jew*. Nor can I see any Reason why he should not be the *Angel of God's Presence*, since elsewhere he is expressly called the *Angel* of that Covenant by which God hath oblig'd himself to be present with his Church for ever, *Mal. 3. 1.* And the *New Testament* so often declares him to be the *Image*, and *Character*, and *Representative* of God; and himself tells *Philip* that he did so perfectly represent the Father, that *whosoever had seen him had seen the Father*, *Joh. 14. 9.* And if this be so, as it seems highly probable, that *The Word* was the *Angel of God's Presence*, that is, the *Chief* or *Prince* of those *Angels* that represented God in the World, then it will follow that the *Shechinah*, or *Majestick Presence* of God, consisted in a glorious and visible Appearance of the Word with a Troop of blessed Angels attending him in bright and luminous Forms. And this I conceive was the glorious Presence of God which came down first upon *Mount Sinai*, and afterwards removed into the *Tabernacle*, and abode between the two *Cherubims*. And this I am rather induced to believe, because I find the Descent of God's Presence upon *Mount Sinai*, is described in the same manner as *Christ's* coming to Judgment; for so, *Matth. 16. 27.* it is said, that he shall come in the Glory of his Father, with his Angels; and *St. Jude* tells us, that he shall come with his holy Myriads, or *Ten Thousands*, *v. 14.* for so it ought to be render'd: And the Lord in the same manner

ner is said to come from Sinai with his holy Ten Thousands, or Myriads; for so it is in the Hebrew, Deut. 33. 2. And since they are both described in the same manner, it seems to follow, that they were both the same Majestick Presence of God, even the Eternal Word assuming a glorious Form, and attended with Myriads of bright and shining Angels. And this same Presence it was that was afterwards displayed in the Tabernacle, which was said to be filled with the Glory of the Lord, which shone from between the Cherubims with a bright and visible Splendour, that is, with the illustrious Appearances of the Eternal Word, and those glorious Angels that attended him. And upon that Mount, and in that Tabernacle, did this blessed Word represent his Father, even as the Vice-Roy doth the Sovereign Prince; for there in his Father's Person, and by his Authority, he gave forth his Laws and Oracles to the Seed of Abraham, and as the Vice-gent of the most High God governed the House of Israel, and distributed to them Rewards and Punishments, according as they behaved themselves towards him: For upon all the fore-named Reasons it seems highly probable, that he was the Lord who spoke to Moses, and from between the Cherubims, and that thence delivered the Law to him. So that as he was the Shechinah, or glorious Presence of the most High God in the Tabernacle, he did there represent his Person by bearing his Authority, and ruling the House of Israel as his Substitute and Vice-Roy.

And that the Words of my Text do refer to this glorious Appearance of the Word in the Tabernacle, and to his representing of the most High God

God there, is very evident, in that it is not only said that he tabernacled among them, which evidently alludes to his dwelling in the *old* Tabernacle, but that they saw *his Glory* too, which is a plain Allusion to that Glory of his which filled the Tabernacle. So that the Meaning of these Words, *He dwelt among us*, seems to be this, that as *Christ* who is the *Eternal Word*, was the *Shechinah*, the *Divine Presence*, or *Angel of God's Presence*, which in the Tabernacle of *old* represented the most *High* to the *Jews*; so he also abode or tabernacled in our *Flesh* as the *Representative* of his Father to Mankind. In the Tabernacle of our *Flesh* he displayed the Glory of his Father to us; he openly manifested and represented him to the World, even as of *old* he was wont to do in the Tabernacle of *Moses*. For, *The Word* to Tabernacle among us must necessarily signify more then barely to dwell or live among us; for it must signify to dwell as the *Shechinah* in the Tabernacle, that is, as the most *glorious* Presence or Representative of the most *High God*, as one that was vested with the *Divine Authority*, and that was the *Vice-gerent* of the Father of all things. So that, *He dwelt among us*, seems to signify the same with, *He reigned among us* in his Father's stead, as one who bore his Authority, and represented his Person, and to whom for the future we were to pay the *same* Homage and Reverence that we were bound to render to the most *High* himself, who under *himself* hath authorized him to be our Prince and Governour to declare his *Divine Will* to us, and exact our Obedience thereunto by *rewarding* and *punishing* us according to the Tenour of those *Laws* which

which he hath established in his *blessed Gospel*; for this is plainly implied in his *Shechanizing* or *Tabernacled*, viz. his being the *glorious Representative* of God in the World. He tabernacled among us, that is, he acted in God's stead, as one that represented his Father; and this he did in our Flesh in a far more *glorious* manner than ever he did in the *Mosaic Tabernacle*; For in our Flesh and Nature he tabernacled *full of Grace and Truth*, which brings me to the next Enquiry, viz.

2. What is here meant by his *dwelling among us full of Grace and Truth*? By these two Phrases the Design of the *holy Penman* is doubtless to distinguish the Manner of his dwelling among us from that of his dwelling among the Jews in the Tabernacle: For a little after he uses the same Phrases in Contradistinction to the Law of Moses: *The Law*, saith he, *was given by Moses, but Grace and Truth by Jesus Christ, v. 17.* God the *Eternal Word* gave the Law to Moses, and Moses gave it to the People of Israel; but Jesus Christ, that is, the *Eternal Word incarnate*, gave not the Law, but *Grace and Truth*. So in the Text, *The Word incarnate*, or tabernacled in our Flesh, did *Shechanize*, or perform the Part of his Father's *supreme Representative* among us *full of Grace and Truth*; which implies something beyond what he did when he dwelt in the Tabernacle of Moses, and there as the *Vice-Roy* of God reigned over the *House of Jacob*. That I may therefore more fully explain this Matter to you, I will briefly consider these two Phrases apart, and shew you in what Particulars they each of them distinguish his dwelling among us from his dwelling in the *Mosaic Tabernacle*.

1. He



1. He dwelt among us *full of Grace*, which distinguishes his dwelling among us from that more *severe*, and *rigorous* manner in the former Tabernacle; and that in these following Particulars:

1<sup>st</sup>. He dwelt among us *full of Grace* in respect of the *Sweetness* and *Obligingness* of his Behaviour, in Contradistinction to that more *dreadful* and *terrible* manner of his conversing with the Jews, when he tabernacled among them. The Jews being a most *stubborn* and *stiff-necked* Generation, (as they are often called in the *Old Testament*) the *Eternal Word* thought fit to converse among them in such a way as was most *suitable* to their *Genius* and *Temper*, to break their *Stubbornness* with the *Dread* of his Power, and awe them with the *Terror* of his Majesty. And accordingly you find that when he came down first upon *Mount Sinai*, he was attended with a *loud sounding* Trumpet, with *Thunders* and *Lightnings*, with *Fire* and *Smoak*, and all the Equipage of a most *dreadful* Majesty, such as caused the Mountain and the People to tremble, *Exod. 19. 16, 20.* And afterwards it is said that the *Glory* in which he appeared, when the People saw him upon the Mount, was like a *devouring* Fire, in which *glorious* Appearance he afterwards removed into the *Tabernacle*, and there abode between the *Cherubims*, *Exod. 40. 34, 35.* And when in all this *dreadful* Majesty he appeared unto them, they are kept at a *great* Distance from him, and were severely forbid to approach him, lest he should *break forth upon them*, and *destroy them*, *Exod. 19. 24.* And whenever they provoked him by their *Murmurings* and *Rebellions*, his *Wrath* broke forth like *Lightning* upon

upon them, and consumed the *ring-leading* Rebels, that by their Example the rest might be warned to do no more wickedly. Thus in all his Conferences with them he clothed himself in a *formidable* Majesty to break, and awe their *sturdy* Spirits, and force their *stiff* Necks to yield to the Yoke of his *Sovereign* Authority. But when he assumed our Nature, and tabernacled among us in our Flesh, he laid by that *astonishing* Majesty that was wont to render him so dreadful to the *Israelites*, and put on all the Condescensions and Sweetnesses of a most *familiar* and *endearing* Conversation, and conversed amongst Men in such a *generous, friendly, and courteous* Manner as was most apt to charm and inamour the World. He was free without being *vain* or *trifling*, serious without being *sour* and *morose*; his Humour always *cheerful* and *uniform*, and his Gravity was equally distant from *Moroseness* and *Vanity*; and in a word, his Deportment was made up of all the Accomplishments that can command either Love or Honour. And though now and then he falls into high Expressions of Indignation, yet 'twas only against those base Fellows the *Pharisees*, who under a Pretence of being *Saints* and the *Godly Party*, were *bloted* up with *Pride* and *Arrogance*, and *canker'd* with *Malice* and *ill Nature*; for which they were so abominable in his Eyes, whose Temper was altogether so *loving* and *divine* that he could not mention them without calling them *Hypocrites*, and the *Children of the Devil*. And if to all this you add his *profound Humility* and *Condescension*, his *Meekness* under *Reproaches*, and his *Constancy* and *Patience* under the *greatest* *Sufferings*, how much more *sweet, grateful, and charming*, was this

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this than when he appeared in such a *dreadful* and *astonishing* Majesty upon *Mount Sinai*, and in the *Tabernacle of Moses*? 'Tis true, the *Innocency* and *Purity* of his Life, the *Divinity* of his Doctrine, and the many mighty Miracles that he wrought, could not but imprint an awful Majesty upon his Person; but yet 'twas a graceful Majesty, a Majesty full of Grace and Sweetness, and such as was much more apt to *endear* than to *affright* Men! For, as for the *Virtue* of his Life, and the *Divinity* of his Doctrine, it could not but attract all those who had any Love and Esteem for Virtue and Goodness. And as for his Miracles, they were vastly *different* from those which he wrought in the Wilderness, which had *little* else in them but Matter of Terror and Astonishment; but these were all such as did express his Kindness to the World, and so were much more apt to *oblige* than to *terrify* those that beheld them: For he went about doing good, and healing all that were oppress'd with the Devil, Acts 10. 38. and healing all manner of Sickness, and all manner of Diseases among the People, Matth. 4. 23. So that in respect of the Sweetness and Obligingness of his Conversation, he tabernacled among us full of Grace, in Contradistinction to that terrible Majesty in which he tabernacled among the Jews.

2dly. He tabernacled among us full of Grace in regard of the Sweetness and Gentleness of his Laws, in Contradistinction to those many burthensom Precepts which he gave when he tabernacled among the Jews. It's apparent by the History of that People that they were obstinately addicted to the Customs of Egypt, from whence they were brought, and of the Neighbouring Nations round about them; and

and thence it was that notwithstanding those *manifest Discoveries* that God had made of himself to them, and of his being the only *true God*, such as one would have thought had been *sufficient* to have convinced the most *obstinate* Gainsayers; yet ever and anon we find them starting aside to the *Idolatrous Customs* of the *Gentiles*, and revolting from that *God* who had so gloriously manifested himself among them. The *Eternal Word* therefore, when he came to *tabernacle* among them, he gave them abundance of *Laws*, the Matter of which was in its *own Nature* perfectly *indifferent*, that by those as by so many Bounds and Fences he might keep them from breaking out of God's Inclosure into the *wild Common* of *Gentilism*; and such were the *greatest Part* of their *Ceremonial Laws*, some of which were instituted in Compliance with the more innocent Rites of the *Heathen*, and others in opposition to those which were purely *magical* and *idolatrous*. And hence it is that in the Law of their Ceremonies, there are so many things enjoined them of which we can give no *tolerable Account*, they being either innocent Customs derived from the *Heathens* in Compliance with the *Jews*, or Prohibitions of those *magical* and *idolatrous Customs* in which the *Jews* had been educated in *Egypt*, and to which they were always very prone and inclinable. So that merely to comply with the *Jews* in what was innocent, and to restrain them in what was *hurtful* and *idolatrous*, the *Eternal Word* was fain to impose a *vast* number of *Positive Laws* upon them, which contained nothing but what was purely indifferent, and might have been done or undone without any Prejudice to the *Eternal Rules*



of Goodness. And accordingly, *Ezek. 20. 24, 25.* it is said, that *because their Eyes were after their Fathers Idols, therefore God gave them Statutes that were not good, that is had no intrinsic Goodness in them; and Judgments whereby they should not live.* And that God imposed, these Things, not as good in themselves, but as accommodated to the present State and Temper of the *Israelites*, is evident from what the *Psalmist* says, *Pf. 51. 16. Thou desirest not Sacrifice; thou delightest not in Burnt-offerings;* though it is evident he had a farther End in imposing very many of these *sacred Rites*, namely to shadow out by them the *Mysteries of the Gospel*, and give them some *preludious Hints* of that *glorious Kingdom of Christ* that was afterwards to be established in the World: But by this means the *Jewish Law* was multiplied into so many *Precepts*, and those many of them so *expensive and burthensom*, that the *Apostle* calls it a *Yoke which neither they, nor their Fathers were able to bear, Acts 15. 10.* and else where a *Yoke of Bondage Gal. 5. 1.* Thus while the *Eternal Word* tabernacled among the *Jews*, his *Laws* were very *rigid and cumberfom*, being clogg'd with so *vast* a number of *positive Rites and Observances*: But when he came to tabernacle in our *Flesh*, he abolished all these *numerous Ceremonies*, and imposed nothing upon the World but what is *sweet, and easy, and full of Grace*. And hence himself tells us, *Matth. 11. 30. ὁ ζυγός μου ἥρεσός ἐστιν, My Yoke is gracious, (for so it is in the Greek) and my Burthen is light;* for it imposes nothing upon us but what is most *agreeable to our rational Natures*, nothing but what we our selves, if we were *wise and good*, should reckon our selves obliged to, though

though he had never enjoined it. For all the Duty he requires of us results immediately from the Frame of our Natures, and the *unalterable* Relations we stand in to *God* and the World. For the Sum of all *Christian* Duty is contained in those *three* Generals, *to live soberly, and righteously, and godly in this present World*; and these must necessarily oblige us so long as we carry *such* Beings about us, and continue in *such* Relations. Whilst *God* is our God and Creator, we cannot be disobliged from living *godly*, that is, from *honouring* and *loving* him, from *fearing* and *trusting* in him, from *serving* and *adoring* him; for unless we could destroy our Relation to him, and cease to be his Creatures, the Dueness of these Acts of Homage and Worship from *us* to *him*, must necessarily abide *for ever*: Whilst we continue to be *reasonable* Animals we cannot be freed from the Obligation of *Sobriety*, which consists in governing our Passions and Appetites by our Reason; for till we can lay by our Reason, which is the *superiour* Principle of our Nature, and step into *another* Form of Beings, it will be always fit that our *inferiour* Powers should be subject to its Conduct and Government. Whilst we continue in the *Society* of Men, and are Members of the Body of Mankind, we cannot be released from the Tyes of *Righteousness*, which contains in it *Charity* and all other *sociable* *Virtues*; and till we cease to be related to Mankind, it can never cease to be *reasonable* for us to do what becomes our Relation, that is, to be *just*, *benign*, and *charitable* to *one another*. So that all that the *Word incarnate* hath enjoined us, is to do what we our selves must needs acknowledge is most *just* and *reasonable*, and what

we should choose to do before any thing in the World, were we not prejudiced against it by our own *base* Lusts and *unreasonable* Passions. So that in respect of those *gracious* Laws he gave us whilst he dwelt among us, he may well be said to dwell among us *full of Grace*.

3dly. He dwelt among us *full of Grace* in respect of that *full* Pardon and Remission which he hath granted to Sinners in his *Gospel*, in Contradistinction to that *partial* and *incomplete* Pardon which he gave when he tabernacled among the *Jews*. For whilst the *Eternal Word* as his Father's Representative reigned over the Nation of *Israel*, he gave no *other* Pardon but *temporal* by the Law of *Moses*, which was the Rule and Instrument of his Government. And I'm sure that from the 20th of *Exod.* to the 27th of *Deut.* in which compass that whole Law is comprized, there is not the *least* mention of any *other* Pardon or Forgiveness allowed to Offenders, but only what respects their *temporal* Punishment; nay in *some* Cases this was not allowed, as particularly in the Cases of *Blasphemy*, *Idolatry*, and *Murther*, no not though they heartily repented of it. For all that Pardon which the *Mosaic* Law allowed, was indulged to them upon their offering up *Propitiatory Sacrifices*, which in these *exempted* Cases were not allowed of, but yet the *Apostle* tells us of all these Sacrifices in general, that the *Blood of Bulls* and of *Goats* could not take away Sin *Heb.* 10. 4. that they did *sanctify* only to the purifying of the flesh, *Heb.* 7. 13. that they could not make him that did the Service perfect, as pertaining to the Conscience, *Heb.* 9. 9. that is, that they only released Offenders from the Obligation to Civil and

and *Ecclesiastical* Punishments, but could by no means free them from the *eternal* Punishments of the *other* Life. Not that I make the *least* Doubt but that truly *penitent* Offenders were forgiven the *eternal* Punishment *then* as well as *now*, and forgiven too for the sake of *Jesus Christ*, the Lamb that was intentionally slain from the Beginning of the World ; but by what hath been said it's plain they were not forgiven by Virtue of that Law whereby the *Eternal Word* reigned over the House of *Israel*, but rather by Virtue of that *Gospel* which was first preached to *Adam*, and afterwards to the *Patriarchs* ; wherein *Christ* the *Seed of the Woman*, and the *Seed of Abraham*, is promised, in whom all Nations of the Earth should be blessed. 'Tis true, the Sacrifices of the *Law* were typical of the Sacrifice of *Christ*, and so consequently was that *temporal* Pardon obtained by them typical of that *eternal* Pardon which we do obtain by the *great Propitiation* of our *Saviour* ; for so the *Apostle* tells us, that the *Law* had in it a shadow of good things to come, *Heb.* 10. 1. But we must not imagine that *eternal* Remission, which is the Effect of *Christ's* real Sacrifice, could ever be obtained by those Sacrifices which were only the Shadows and Resemblances of it. So that that Remission of Sins which the *Eternal Word* gave whilst he tabernacled among the *Jews*, was nothing near so perfect and compleat as that which he afterwards proclaimed in the Tabernacle of our *Flesh*, because it neither extended to all Kinds of Sins, nor yet to all Kinds of Punishments ; it left *some* unforgiven as to the Punishments of this Life, and it left *all* unforgiven as to the Punishments of the Life to come. But having



pitched his Tabernacle in our Flesh, he did by the *meritorious* Sacrifice of himself obtain of his Father this *publick* Act of Grace, this *free* Charter of Mercy for all Mankind, That whosoever would repent and amend, whatsoever Sins he is guilty of, whatsoever Punishments he is obliged to, he shall certainly be forgiven them all, and be as freely received into God's Grace and Favour, as if he never had offended him; for he is the Propitiation for the Sins of the World; *And by him*, saith the Apostle, *all that believe are justified from all things, from which they could not be justified by the Law of Moses*, Acts 13. 39. In this respect therefore the *Eternal Word* dwelt among us *full of Grace*, in that he proclaimed such a full and perfect Pardon of all Sins, and of all Punishments to all that with a true Faith and hearty Repentance, should turn unto him; and accordingly this Pardon is frequently called by the Name of *Grace*, or of the *Grace of God*, and of our Lord Jesus Christ, Acts. 15. 11. Heb. 12. 15. & Rom. 3. 24.

4thly. He dwelt among us *full of Grace* in respect of the *internal* Grace and Assistance, which he so abundantly afforded us above what he did to the *Jews* under the Law of *Moses* when he tabernacled among them. I make no doubt but God in all Ages hath been always ready to assist good Men in their Duty. This the very *Heathens* themselves believed, that *καὶ οἱ ἄνθρωποι ἰσχυροὶ ἐσὶν ἀγαθοῖς*, that God did concur with all good Men, and that no Man did ever arrive to any eminent Degree of Virtue without a *Divine* Affatus, or Assistance. And had the good Men among the *Jews* been ignorant of this, what should move them to pray, as we find they

they often do, that *God* would wash and cleanse, and quicken and strengthen, and inviven them? For so, in the *Book of the Psalms*, you find good *David* very often praying that *God* would teach him his *Commandments*, and incline his *Heart* to keep them, and keep him back from presumptuous *Sin*. By which Prayers it's evident they had good Encouragement to hope that *God* would be ready to concur with them, and to bless their pious Endeavours with the internal Assistance of his Grace and Spirit. And this Encouragement I suppose they might have partly from their natural Notions of *God*, which must needs suggest to them that He being infinitely good as he is, will never be wanting to his Creatures in any think that is necessary to the obtaining those noble Ends for which he created them, and consequently that he will be assistant to them in their Duty, which is the way to that End, and not leave them to contend with Difficulties which are insuperable to their natural Power and Ability; and partly from those general Evangelical Promises which *God* made to them by the *Patriarchs* and *Prophets*, from whence they might fairly infer that he who had promised to do so much for them, upon Condition they persisted in their Duty and Allegiance to him, would never be wanting on his Part to strengthen and enable them to it. But I can by no means allow that they were encouraged to hope for any such Assistance from any Promise of that Law which the *Eternal Word* gave them when he tabernacled among them, and by which in his Father's stead he ruled and governed them; and that both because there is no such Promise found in all that Law, and because the *Apostle* tells  
us,

us, that the Law was weak through the flesh, Rom. 8. 3. and calls it the *Ministration of Death* written and engraven in stones, in opposition to the *Ministration of the Spirit* that is not written in Tables of stone, but in *fleshy Tables of the heart*, 2 Cor. 3. 7, 8. comp. with v. 3. And, Galat. 3. 13, 14. you find the *Apostle* opposes to the *Curse of the Law*, the *Blessing of Abraham*, and the *Blessing of Abraham* he tells us is the *Promise of the Spirit through Faith*, that is, by the *Gospel*. And thus under the Law there was doubtless an *internal Grace* and *Assistance* vouchsafed to good Men, though not promised by it; yet after the *Eternal Word* forsook the *Tabernacle of Moses*, and came to tabernacle in our *Flesh*, it's evident that then he did more plentifully communicate this his *Grace* to the *World* than ever; for then the *Spirit* was said to be shed upon us abundantly through *Jesus Christ our Lord*; and in the 16th ver. of this 1st of *John*, we are said of his fullness to receive  $\chi\lambda\epsilon\upsilon\sigma\iota\varsigma\ \delta\upsilon\tau\iota\ \chi\lambda\epsilon\iota\sigma\iota\varsigma$ , *Grace upon Grace*, that is, *Grace* heaped upon *Grace*, and a vast overflowing *Abundance*; according to that of *Theognis*,  $\delta\omicron\lambda\iota\kappa\epsilon\ \tau\ \delta\upsilon\tau\ \delta\upsilon\iota\sigma\tau\ \delta\upsilon\lambda\iota\alpha\varsigma$ , that is, thou givest me *Calamities upon Calamities*. So that unless we will our selves it is now impossible we should fall short either of our *Duty*, or the *blessed Reward* of it, since our *Saviour* is become such an overflowing *Fountain of Grace* to us, and hath promised to communicate it to us in such plentiful *Effusions* if we will sincerely ask, and honestly endeavour after it; and therefore in this respect also he may well be said to dwell among us full of *Grace*, in that while he dwelt among us he obtained for, and promised to us such an accumulated *Plenty of inward Grace* and *Assistance* to encourage and enable us to do his *Commandments*. sly. He

5thly. He dwelt among us full of Grace in respect of the Vastness of the Recompence which he promised to us, and which infinitely exceeds whatsoever he promised when he dwelt in the Tabernacle of Moses. For when the *Eternal Word* reigned over *Israel* as the *Vice-Roy* and Substitute of his Father, he only acted the Part of their *Civil Sovereign* or Governour ; which Part he continued till they chose another King, and then he resigned his Title to the succeeding Heirs of *David*. And accordingly we find, that when the *Israelites* first desired a King of *Samuel* God bids him hearken to their Cry; For, saith he, they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them, 1 Sam 8. 7. Which is a plain Argument that before he only acted as their *Political* Prince in that he interprets their desiring another King, to be a rejecting of him from reigning over them. For had he been no otherwise King over *Israel*, then as he is over other Nations where the true Religion is owned and professed, his Dominion might have fairly consisted with that of another King or Sovereign ; and it would have been no more a rejecting God's Rule for *Israel* to desire a King, then it is for *France*, or *Spain*, or *England*. For it's plain the *Israelites* did not reject God's *Divine* Dominion, which he claims over the World as the *Omnipotent* Creator of all things ; for then their Desire of a King had been *Idolatry*, and the Kings whom they desired had been *Idols*, or false Gods. It is plain therefore, that it was his *Political* Dominion only which they rejected by desiring another King to reign in his stead, - which he interprets as their Intention to rob and divest him of that *Civil Authority*



thority which till then he had claimed and exercised among them. So that the *plain Sense* of their Desire was this, *God* shall no longer be our *Civil Sovereign*, but for the *future* we are resolved to have a King from among *our* selves, even as *other Nations* round about us, whom we will invest with the same *Civil Authority* which hitherto he hath challenged and exercised among us. *God the Eternal Word* therefore being their *Civil Prince* or Ruler, as such he gave them the *Mosaick Law*, which he only designed to be the Rule or Instrument of his *Civil Government* and Dominion; which is the Reason why in *that Law* he only promised *civil* or *temporal* Blessings, because it was only a Law of *Civil Government*, and as such could design no further then the *civil* or *temporal* Happiness of those who were to be ruled and governed by it. And accordingly if you peruse the Promises of that Law, you will find that they all consist of *outward* and *temporal* Blessings; such as *Health* of Body and *Victory* over their Enemies, *Peace* among themselves, and with their *Neighbouring Nations*, *Plenty* of Bread, and the *Conveniences* of Life, and *Success* and *Prosperity* in all their Affairs; and therefore the *Author to the Hebrews* calls the *Gospel* the bringing in of a *better Hope*, and upon this Account opposes it to the Law of *Moses*, *Heb. 7. 19.* which plainly implies that *that Law* brought in no *better Hope* then that of a *temporal* Happiness; and those Words of the *Apostle*, *Gal. 3. 12.* *The Law is not of Faith; but The Man that doth them, shall live in them,* do plainly seem to imply this Sense. The Law proposing only *present* and *sensible* Blessings to such as do it, such as that *Thou shalt live a happy and prosperous Life in this World*, doth not require Faith properly so called, which is the *Evidence of things not seen*; that

that is, of the *invisible* Blessings of the *other* Life; and v. 21. he plainly asserts, that if there had been any *other* Law besides the *Gospel* that could have given that *promised* Life *Righteousness* would have been by that Law; and therefore since, as he asserts, *Righteousness* was by no *other* Law but the *Gospel*, it follows that no *other* Law, no not that of *Moses*, could give or promise *Life eternal*. Not that I make the *least* Doubt, but *Good Men* under the Law of *Moses* did firmly believe a *future* Happiness; for this the very *Heathens* themselves had very *great* Hopes and Expectations of, though they never had so much Reason as the *Jews* to induce them to believe: For, besides all those *weighty* Arguments which were *common* to them with the *Heathens*, they had those *general Evangelical* Promises which God made to the *Patriarchs* of *being their God*, and *their exceeding great Reward*; the Histories of the Translations of *Enoch* and *Elijah*, and of *sundry* most *eminent* Examples of God's *exceeding* Love to Goodness and *good Men*, from whence they might easily infer, that sure he had *better* Rewards in store for them than any of the *transitory* Blessings of this Life, especially when they saw how many *good Men* were deprived of these, and left *naked* and *destitute* of all worldly Comforts: Besides all which, in every Age they had Prophets that were divinely inspired, and who, among all the Secrets that were revealed to them, cannot be supposed to have been wholly unacquainted with the *typical* Meaning of their Ceremonies and Polity, which among other things presignified the *glorious* Re-compences of the Life to come. But however they came by it, I think it is very apparent from *sundry* Passages in the *Book of the Psalms*, *Ezekiel* and  
Daniel,

*Daniel*, that they were far from being Strangers to the Doctrine of a *blessed Immortality hereafter*; though I think it is very apparent from what hath been said, that they did not derive their Belief of this Doctrine from any express Promise of their Law. But yet it is very apparent, that though they were not altogether unacquainted with it, yet 'twas never so clearly discovered to them by the *Eternal Word* as it was afterwards to *us* by the *Word Incarnate*, since, as the *Apostle* tells us, *He brought Life and Immortality to light by the Gospel*: For therein he hath most clearly promised it to us, and as far as humane Language can express, explained and unfolded its Nature; and by his own Resurrection, and Ascension into *Heaven*, hath given us a *clear and visible Demonstration* of its Truth and Reality; so that now the Existence of it is become as certain to us, as it's possible for a *Matter of Fact* to be; and we cannot be more infallibly assured of it than we are, unless we had been personally in *Heaven*, and had there surveyed its Glories with our own Eyes. Well therefore may He be said to have dwelt among us *full of Grace*, since he was graciously pleased to make us such express Promises of future Happiness, and give us such ample Assurance of its Reality and Existence. And so I have done with the first Note of Distinction between Christ's dwelling among *us*, and his dwelling in the *Mosaick Tabernacle*: He dwelt among us *full of Grace*.

2. The other Character by which his dwelling among *us* is distinguished from his dwelling in the *Mosaick Tabernacle*, is this, that he dwelt among us *full of Truth*. It's plain that *Truth* here is not to be

be understood as opposed to *Falshood*, because in that Sense it is no Note of Distinction between these *two* Dwellings or Tabernaclings of *Christ*, unless we suppose that he did falsely dwell, or act, and represent *God* in the Tabernacle of *Moses*, which would be to blaspheme his Truth and Veracity. Truth therefore must here be understood as opposed to *Obscurity* and *Shadow*, and so must denote *Clearness* and *Reality*, as it very commonly doth. As when we say a Picture is not a *true* Man, we do not charge the Picture with a Lye; if it could speak indeed, and should call it self a Man, we should then say it were a *lying* Picture for pretending to be what it is not, being only a *silent* Resemblance of him. Thus when the *Apostle* saith, *He dwelt among us full of Truth*, and thereby distinguishes his tabernacling among *us* from the manner of his dwelling among the *Jews*, it is not so to be understood as if he had dwelt among them in a *false* or *lying* manner, or that *that* Representation which he made to them of *God* and *Divine* Things were *false* and *imposturous*; no, God forbid: But thus, whereas when He inhabited the Tabernacle, he was full of *Hieroglyphicks*, or *mystical* Representations, which though they were *true* Pictures or Shadows of *Divine* Things, yet have not the Truth and Reality of the Things themselves in them, and consequently would be Lies and Cheats should they pretend to be what they only represent; but now he is come to dwell among us, he is full of the Things themselves, of those *Realities* which formerly he only gave us the *Types* and *Shadows* of; now he hath removed all that Scene of Pictures and *mystical* Representations, and brought the  
Things



Things themselves upon the Stage, and exposed them *naked* to the View of the World. So that *now* he doth not entertain *us*, as *heretofore* he did the *Jews*, with *Emblems* and *Shadows*, but with Truth, and the *real* Substances of Things. And thus the Word is very frequently taken in the *New Testament*: Thus, *Heb.* 8. 2. the *Christian Church* is called the *true Tabernacle*, in Contradistinction to the *Tabernacle of Moses*; not as if that were a *false* Tabernacle, but a *typical* one, it being designed only as a Shadow of the *Christian Church*, which is the *true* Reality and Substance which was pictured and represented in it; for so the *Apostle* himself explains it, *Heb.* 9. 24. For *Christ*, saith he, *is not entred into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true, but into Heaven it self*: From whence it's plain, that therefore those *Holy Places* are opposed to *true Places*, because they were only Figures, or *mystical* Representations of something that is *real* and *substantial*. So, *Dan.* 7. 16. when *Daniel* desired to know the Truth of that *Prophetick Scene*, it is said, that *One stood by, and made him know the Interpretation of the things*; that is, what was the Reality and Substance that was represented in those Types and Figures. So here, *He dwelt among us full of Truth*, that is, when he dwelt among us he was full of the Substance and Reality of those Things which before he was wont to represent by *obscure Emblems* and *Shadows*; now he presents to us the Things themselves, and not the *mystical* Types and Figures of them as formerly he was wont to do. For I think it's very evident, that the *whole Model* of the *Jewish Polity* was purposely contrived to be an *Emblem* and Representation of the *Gospel*; and that

that the *main* Reason of those *numerous* Rites and Ceremonies, was to delineate and shadow out the *glorious* Mysteries of *Christianity* : For the Apostle plainly tells us, that they were all a *shadow of things to come*, and that *the Body*, or Substance of that Shadow, was *Jesus Christ*, Col. 2. 17. And the Author to the *Hebrews* calls them *the Patterns of the things in Heaven*, or the *heavenly Things* ; by which it's plain he means *Christ*, or the Subjects of the Kingdom of *Christ*, since he tells us that as it was *necessary* that those Patterns should be purified with Blood, so it was *necessary* that those *Heavenly Things* represented by them, should be purified by a *better Sacrifice*, Heb. 9. 23. And what other *Heavenly Things*, are there but only *Christians* that are purified with this *better Sacrifice* of *Christ* ? And in another place the same Author tells us, that *the Law* hath in it a *Shadow of good things to come*, Heb. 10. 1. And thus very frequently in the *New Testament*, the *sacred Rites* of the *Mosaick Law* are declared to be Types and Shadows of the *Mysteries* of the *Gospel*, as particularly in the Epistle to the *Hebrews*, which is almost wholly spent upon this Argument, And this the *Jews* themselves seem to be acquainted with long before the Publication of the *Gospel*: For so the most ancient *Jews* look'd upon the Temple as a Type and Figure of the *Heavenly State* ; and *Philo the Jew*, in his *Allegories of the Law*, and almost in all his other Writings, makes the Rites and Ceremonies of the *Mosaick Law* to be Types and Figures of some *Divine* or *Moral Truth*, and particularly the *High Priest* to be an *Emblem* of the *Eternal Word*, and his Crown and Vestments to be Representations of his Au-  
thority

thority and *Divine* Perfections, wherein he exactly agrees with the Author to the *Hebrews*. And from *sundry* Passages in the *Book of Psalms* it seems evident, that the *good Jews* had a Prospect beyond the *Outside* and Letter of the Law, even into the *typical* Sense and Meaning of it ; and that through its *glimmering* Shadows and Resemblances, they beheld very much of the Substance and Realities of the *Gospel* : For hence probably was that of *David*, *Pf. 25. 14. The Secret of the Lord is with them that fear him* ; for certainly the *Secret of the Lord* here cannot be meant the *Fore-knowledge* of *future Events*, since under the *Old Testament* that was neither restrained to *good Men*, nor much less was it universally with them that feared *God* ; and therefore it seems more probable, that by it we are to understand those *then secret* Mysteries of the *Gospel*, which were so obscurely represented in the Types and Figures of the *Law* ; especially if we compare this with that Prayer of *David*, *Psalms 119. 18. Open thou mine Eyes that I may behold the wondrous things out of thy Law* ; which methinks plainly intimates that the *good Man* did believe there were some *wondrous* Mysteries contained under those *dark* and *typical* Representations : And afterwards, *v. 27. make me to understand the way of thy Precepts, so shall I talk of thy wondrous Works* ; which implies that he believed that there were some Things very *mystical* and *hard* to be understood contained within the Precepts of their Law, which in their *literal* Sense were *easy* and *obvious*, and had nothing of Depths or Mystery in them ; and therefore certainly had he not seen something within them beyond their Rine and  
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*Outside*, he would never have prayed so earnestly as he doth, *that God would teach him his Laws*, and that he would not hide from him his Commandments, as he doth, *v. 19.* much less would he have imagined that by *understanding of them* he should be enabled to talk of such wondrous Things. Afterwards, *v. 69.* he tells us, that he had seen an end of all Perfection, but God's Commandments are exceeding broad; which denotes that he who had seen an End of all Things else, had discovered so vast and boundless a Depth in the Commands of God, that he could see no End of it; whereas it's plain, that the literal Meaning of them was very narrow and contracted, and far from being so exceeding broad; which argues that the good Man had discovered under the Letter and Surface of them, a Myne of mystical Sense which he could not reach the Bottom of, and that God had given him a Glimps of those glorious Secrets of the Gospel which he had wrapt up, and involved in the typical Precepts of the Law. Thus the *Eternal Word* while he tabernacled among the Jews, revealed his Gospel to them by Types and Shadows, and mystical Representations of it, which, though it was very obscure and imperfect, yet seems to have been the best and clearest that the present State of that People could admit of. For it seems plain by the History of the Jews, that they were naturally a very rude and untractable People, and doubtless they were never worse than when they came out of the Land of Egypt, where their bad Temper was doubtless very much improved by those gross Idolatries in which they had been educated; so that being bad themselves, and also extreamly debauched by the

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wicked Manners of the *Egyptians*, it is not to be supposed that they were Subjects capable of the Heights and Purities of *Religion*; for if from the *Depth* of *Immorality*, whereinto they were sunk, God should have immediately strained them up to the *highest* Pitch of *Gospel-Purity*, in all Probability they would never have born it; but like the Strings of a *Musical Instrument*, being wound too high, would have been apt to crack and fly in pieces, and wholly to revolt from God into those gross Idolatries which yet they were hardly weaned from, and which were still so *suitable* to their Genius and Temper. So that as yet there was so great a Gulph between them and the *Gospel*, that 'twas hardly possible either for them to go to *that*, or for *that* to come to them. And therefore as God in his own high Wisdom hath placed a *Twilight* between the Night and the Morning to secure our Sight lest our weak Eyes should be dazled by a too sudden Irruption of the *Broad-day's* Glory; so did he deal with the *Jews*: He thought it not convenient immediately to post them out of utter Darknes into perfect Light, but first interposes a less pure Religion as a *Medium* or *Twilight* between the *Heathen* and the *Gospel State*, that so by *that* he might prepare their Sight for the Reception of a more perfect Splendor, and make them fit to entertain the severer Purities of the *Gospel* without being offended or dazled with it's Glory. But yet in Wisdom he hath so contrived and modeled this less perfect Religion, as to make it most instructive and useful, having so ordered its sacred Rites and Ceremonies as to make them Representative of the whole Method and Oeconomy of the *Gospel*; and though

though those *typical* Representations were very *obscure* and *dark*, so that the *Gospel* seemed to run under ground in the midst of those *Ceremonial* Observances, yet it frequently broke forth, and opened it self in the midst of them, and by degrees in the *Prophetick Age* did make it a larger Channel, till by its Force and Violence it did overthrow these Banks, that stood in its way, and overspread the Face of the whole Earth. So that it's plain that the Obscurity of those *typical* Representations did not render them wholly useless, since they were not so obscure, but those who were *good*, and *diligent*, and *serious* in the Study of them might be, and were instructed by them in whatsoever was *necessary* to make them *good* and *happy*. For though those *Types* had not a Mouth to speak out the *Gospel*, yet they had a Hand to point to it, they being as it were *rude* Draughts of that which was afterwards to be drawn to the *greatest* Life and Exactness; and this it's plain was understood by all *good* Men whose Hearts were carried beyond the *outward* Letter of the Law, to the more *inward* and *spiritual* Meaning of it; wherein they discovered those *Evangelical Mysteries* that were *veiled* and *hidden* under the *outward* Ceremonies, which made up that true *spiritual* *Cabala* which seems constantly to have been preserved among the *true Israelites*, and which afterwards was more largely commented on by the *Prophets* of the *succeeding* Ages, whose Care it was to unlock this *Cabala*, or *spiritual* Sense of the Law, and to raise up the Hearts of that People to a *higher* Expectation of the *great* Things which were to come. So that you see the State and Condition

of the *Jews* would not admit of a plain Discovery of the *Gospel* to them, but required an *outward Ceremonial Religion*, that being most *accommodate* to their *Genius* and *Temper*; and therefore though the *Eternal Word* for the *present* Exigence established such a *Religion* among them, yet He wisely framed and modelled it into a *typical* Representation of the *Gospel*, that so thereby he might prepare them for it, and so far instruct them in the Knowledge of it as was *necessary* to their Welfare and Happiness. And hence the *Apostle* tells the *Jews*, that the *Law* was their *School-master* to bring them unto *Christ*, that they might be justified by Faith, and that now after Faith was come, they were no longer under their *School-master*, Gal. 3. 4, 25. that is, while they were in their *Infantine*, *Childish* State, and *incapable* of a more perfect Institution, God set the *Law* as a *School-master* over them, that that by its *Types*, and *Pictures*, and *Emblems*, might gradually instruct them in the *Mysteries* of *Christ*; and the *Gospel*, that so when it was openly revealed they might be justified by the Belief of it; and therefore now since the *Gospel* was come, they were no longer under the Tutorage of that *School-master*, now they were no longer to learn *Christ* by *Types* and *mystical* Representations, since he himself was present with them, and had openly revealed those *Divine* Mysteries which under those *Types* were so obscurely *adumbrated*. So that you see the *Eternal Word* tabernacled among the *Jews* in a far different manner from what he did when he pitched his *Tabernacle* in *our* Natures; for when he tabernacled among *them* he was full of *Types*, and *Shadows*, and *mystical* *Emblems*; He instructed





them, as you may find it demonstrated at large in the Epistle to the *Hebrews*. For as to the *High Priest*, he was to be called, and ordained of God, *Heb. 5. 4.* in which the *Eternal Word* represented to them his Commission from the Father, to descend into the World as his *Embassador* to Men. Secondly, He was to be born of a Woman that came a *pure Virgin* into the Arms of his Father, *Levit. 21. 14.* in which he seems to represent to them his own *pure Nativity* of a *Virgin-Mother*. Thirdly, He was to be washed with Water, and his Flesh and Loyns were to be covered with the *whitest* and the *cleanest* Linnen, *Exod. 29. 7. and 28. 42.* by which Christ typified to them the *IMMACULATE* Sanctity and Innocence of his *humane* Life. Fourthly, He was to be clothed in the most glorious Garments that could possibly be made by the most excellent Workmen, *Exod. 28. 2, 3.* which seems to denote the *Majesty* of Christ's Person, and those glorious Works by which he render'd himself so illustrious in the World. Fifthly, The Colours of the Embroideries of his Garment being *blue, purple, scarlet, and white*, seem to denote the *Truth* of his *Prophetick Office*, the *Majesty* of his *Royal*, the *Perfection* of his *Priestly*, and his *Innocence* and *Sanctity* in the Execution of them all. Sixthly, He wore a *holy Crown* on his Head, and a *Plate* on his Forehead engraven with *Holiness*; which denotes the *Divine Authority* of Christ, and the *Sacredness* and *Divinity* of his Person. And, Seventhly, Upon his Breast he wore the *Urim and Thuminim*, in which was prefigured the *Height* and *Purity* of Christ's Doctrine, and the *Holiness* and *Perfection* of his Laws. In a word, the *High Priest* was to offer  
Sacrifice

Sacrifice for the Sins of the People, on the *great day of Expiation*, which Sacrifice was to be a *Beast without blemish* voluntarily presented at the Door of the Tabernacle, whither the *High Priest* being come, he was to strip off his *glorious Garment*, to lay his Hand on the Head of the Beast, and to confess the Peoples Sins over it, and then to slay the Beast, and carry some of the Blood of it within the *Vail*, and sprinkle it upon, and before the *Mercy-Seat*, by which he is said to make an Attonement for their Sins; that is, to obtain Authority from God to bless and pardon: In which the *Eternal Word* gives us a plain Representation of his *future Sacrifice upon Earth*, and *Intercession in Heaven*; for he being both our *Sacrifice* and *High Priest*, did freely divest himself of the Glory and Dignity of his *Humane Nature*, and offer up himself to die for us; by which he laid his Hand as it were upon his own *spotless and immaculate Head*, did as our *Representative* acknowledge what we had deserved, that for our Sins we have justly merited to die *for ever* by the Hand of God, even as He for our sakes did submit to die by the Hand of Man: And having performed this *bloody Sacrifice*, he enters into *Heaven*, which is the true *Holy of Holies*, and there by the Oblation of his Blood and Obedience, makes an Attonement for our Sins, and obtains Authority from his Father to pardon and receive into Favour every truly *penitent* Offender in the World. Thus you see how the *Personal Transactions* of our *Saviour* were under the Law of *Moses* represented in *mystical Types* and *Figures*; but when he came to tabernacle among us, he did all *that* which before he only represented;

ted : He actually came down from the Father to us, was born of the *Holy Virgin*, lived a most *holy* and *innocent* Life, died a *Sacrifice* for our Sins, and is gone into *Heaven* to intercede for us : So that now instead of *Types* and *Figures*, we have the *Substances* and *Realities* that were obscurely shadowed and represented in them.

2. Another great Instance of his conversing among us full of Truth, is the Purity and Spirituality of his Laws. It's apparent that those which he gave to the Jews, according to the literal Sense of them, did only oblige them to an *External Obedience* ; and therefore St. Paul calls the whole Law a *carnal Commandment*, Heb. 7. 16. and the Precepts of it he calls *carnal Ordinances imposed upon them till the time of Reformation*, Heb. 9. 10. But yet it is apparent that by these *carnal Ordinances* the *Eternal Word* did designedly typify and represent that *internal Purity* of Soul which the *Evan-gelical Law* doth exact : For he seeing that the Jews were not only a *perverse*, but also a *dull* and *sortish* People, as those generally are who are born and bred in Slavery, and that therefore they were *incapable* of *sublime* and *spiritual* Precepts, and would be apt to forget *plain* ones, He therefore thought it most proper and suitable to their 'Capacity and Genius to instruct them by *sensible* and *material* Signs, even as Parents do sometimes teach their Children by Pictures ; for of this his Condescension to their Dulness and Capacity, the Prophet *Isaiah* takes notice, Chap. 28. 10, 11. where he saith, that he gave them *precept upon precept, line upon line, here a little and there a little with a stammering tongue* ; that is, he look'd upon them as Children, and so condescended to their Weakness, and

and spoke to them in their *own* Dialect. And this Way of instructing them by *outward* and *visible* Signs was the most *probable* to take effect, because it was much in use in the *Eastern Countries*, but more especially in *Egypt*, whose Manners they were infinitely fond of, to wrap up their most excellent Precepts in *Hieroglyphicks*, which were nothing but Pictures and *material* Signs, by which they represented their *Divine* and *Moral* Institutions. Thus therefore by such *visible* Signs and Pictures, the *Eternal Word* instructed them in the Rules of *internal* Purity and Goodness; so by *Circumcision* he signified to them the Circumcision of their Hearts; and by their *several Washings*, Purity from *Hypocrisy* and *Sensuality*; yea this was probably the Intent of that Difference of *Meats*, as *St. Barnabas* in his Epistle tells us, that Swines Flesh was pronounc'd *unclean*, to instruct them not to live like *Hogs* that clamour when they are *hungry*, and forget their Masters when they are *full*; that *Eagles*, and such *ravenous Birds* were forbidden to be eat, to teach them that those who live not by *Industry*, but *Rapine*, are *abominable*; that *Fish without Scales*, which generally dwell in the Mud, were all pronounced *unclean*; to teach them the Evil of *Sensuality*, and *Earthly-mindedness*! Thus by these *outward* Signs his Intent was to insinuate into them *internal* Purity of Mind; and this was very well understood by those who were *good* and *wise* among them: Hence we find *David* gives very *high* *Encomiums* of the Law, *Psal.* 19. 7, 8. *The Law of the Lord is perfect, converting the Soul, making wise the simple; rejoicing the Heart, enlightening the Eyes, &c.* which Characters are proper only to that *inward*



ward and *spiritual* Sense of the Law that was *decyphered* upon those *outward* Signs and Ceremonies. Which Sense seems to have been very *little* taken notice of by the *stupid* *Vulgar* ; for only the Ceremony it self was Matter of Law to them, which if they observed they were not *punishable* by that Law, though they never took notice of its *spiritual* Sense and Meaning, which made them neglect that *inward* Purity which was pictured on those *outward* Signs, and place the whole of their Righteousness in an *outside* ceremonious Pageantry. Hence is that of St. Paul, 2 Cor. 3. 13, 14, 15. *I used, saith he, great plainness of Speech: And not as Moses, which put a Vail over his Face, that the Children of Israel could not stedfastly look unto the end of that which is abolished. But their Minds were blinded; for until this day remaineth the same Vail untaken away, in the reading the Old Testament; which Vail is done away in Christ: By which Vail he means those outward Shadows and Types in which the mystical Sense of the Law was wrapt and involved; and it seems they were so taken with the Pomp and Gaity of the outside, that they never minded that rich Treasure of Sense that was contained within it, and which the Apostle here calls the end of that which is abolished; yea, to this day, saith he, the Vail of outward Ceremonies stands so much in their Light that they cannot discern the internal Sense of the Old Testament; but now, saith he, it is done away by Christ. Now that the Eternal Word hath pitched his Tabernacle in our Nature, those outward Types wherein this inward Purity of Soul was so obscurely intimated, are vanished like Clouds before the Sun, and in their room are introduced*

troduced the most *pure* and *spiritual* Laws of the Gospel, which are no longer couched in Types and *Ceremonial* Shadows, but in *plain* and *naked* Propositions. Now *internal* Holiness is palpably declared to be the *great* Design of Religion, that we should *cleanse* our selves from all *Filthiness* of *Flesh* and *Spirit*, and *perfect* Holiness in the fear of God. This therefore is *another* Instance of Christ's tabernacling among us *full of Truth*, viz. the *Purity* and *Spirituality* of his Laws, which heretofore he *mystically* represented to the *Jews* by *outward* Rites and Ceremonies.

3. Another Instance of his tabernacling among us *full of Truth*, in Contradistinction to that *obscure* typical Way of his conversing among the *Jews*, is the Condition and Quality of his *Church* and *Kingdom*. The *Eternal Word*, designing to erect a *glorious* Kingdom in the World, drew as it were a *rude* Scheme or Draught of it in the Form and Model of the *Jewish Polity*. For *first* he erects a Kingdom among them of which himself was King, to typify that *Spiritual* Kingdom which afterwards he meant to establish in the World ; then he adopts the *Jews* to be his Children by the *external* Sign of *Circumcision*, who are therefore called a *Holy Seed*, which was an Emblem of that *Holy Seed* which afterwards he designed to beget to himself by *spiritual* Regeneration, which is therefore called the *Circumcision of the Heart*, whose Praise is not of Men, but of God. His delivering them from the Bondage of *Egypt*, and leading them through the *Red-Sea* and the Wilderness into *Canaan*, typified his delivering of his *future Church* from the Bondage of Sin and Satan, and leading it by his own  
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*gacious* Presence through the *Red-Sea* of Blood, and Persecutions, and the Wilderness of the World to the *Canaan* of eternal Rest. His giving the Law on *Mount Sinai* in Fire, was a Figure of his delivering the *Gospel* by the Spirit, which came down in *fiery cloven Tongues* at the *Feast of Pentecost*. Thus his erecting the Ark in the Wilderness was also another Type of that *Spiritual Kingdom* which afterwards he meant to erect in the World. The divers Ornaments and Instruments of that Tabernacle represented the Diversity of *spiritual Gifts* and Functions in the *Christian Church*; its being covered with Skins *without*, and adorned with Gold *within*, shadowed the mean and contemptible Form wherein the *Christian Church* first appeared to the World, notwithstanding the *inward* Glory and Purity with which it was adorned and embellished. The Glory of *God* appearing in the Tabernacle, denoted the Presence of *Christ* in his Church, which he hath promised to continue to the end of the World; its being removed from Place to Place, and finding no Rest till it was lodged in the Temple, prefigured the *persecuted State* of the *Primitive Church*, which was hunted up and down the World by the mighty *Nimrods* of the Earth, and could find no Rest till it was transported to the *Heavenly Temple*. By these and such like Types and Shadows did the *Eternal Word* prefigure the State and Condition of his *future Church*, that so when it came to be erected in the World, the *Jews* might know and own it, having seen it beforehand so exactly *decyphered* and *adumbrated* in the very Frame and Model of their own Polity. But when he came to tabernacle in our Nature he gave  
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*actual* Being to those Things which before he only *shadowed* and *represented*; for then he erected this *glorious Church*, of which the *Jewish* was only a Model and Platform, delivered it from the *Egyptian Bondage* of Wickedness and Idolatry, and by his own *glorious* Presence conducted the Members of it through all the Persecutions of an *enraged* World, to the *Canaan* of *eternal Rest*; and therefore this also is *another plain* Instance of his tabernacling among us *full of Truth*, the State and Condition of his Church, which before was so obscurely represented.

4. And lastly, *Another* Instance of his tabernacling among us *full of Truth*, in Contradistinction to that *obscure* and *typical* Way of his conversing among the *Jews*, is the *glorious* Recompences which he hath so plainly and clearly promised to his Subjects. For this he also obscurely *typified* to the *Jews*; for, as I have already hinted, by that *Canaan* which he bestowed upon them after their *seditions* Travel through the Wilderness, he did darkly represent to them that *Canaan* above flowing with *infinite* Delights, which he hath promised to bestow upon his *faithful* Servants after they have pass'd through the Wilderness of this World. So also by their *Sabbaoths*, and especially their *Year of Jubilee*, wherein they were to rest from all their Labours, and keep a *perpetual* Festivity, He did obscurely *decypher* to them that *Sabbaoth* of *Rest*, and *Jubilee* of *endless* Pleasure which *vertuous* Souls shall enjoy in *Heaven* after they have finished their Labours here on *Earth*, as you may see at large *Heb. 4.* Now by these and such like *Shadows* of their Law, which possibly the Prophets by *Divine*  
Inspiration



Inspiration might expound to them, those who were *wise* and *good* among them, it is very probable, were instructed in the Article of *eternal* Life. Hence it may be might arise that *famous* Controversy among the *Jews* concerning the *Written* and *Oral* Law, which they call the *Cabala*, or the Law by Tradition; not that this *traditional* contained any thing that was not in the *written* Law, but because those things which were obscurely contained in the *Types* of the *written* Law were explained and interpreted in this their *Traditional* Law. But it is *apparent* that the *Types* of *eternal* Life were not fully explained in this *traditional* Law till after the *Babylonish Captivity*, after which the Prophet *Daniel*, and after him *Ezekiel* began to speak more plainly of the *Resurrection of the Dead*; and from that Time forwards the Doctrine of the *Resurrection* and *eternal* Life, began to be more openly taught among the *Common People* till about the Time of the *Maccabees*, when it was brought forth into the Light from under those *Types* in which it was so obscurely represented, and became a Principle even of the *Popular Religion*, and an Article of the *Jewish Faith*, as plainly appears from the Records of those Times, particularly 2 *Macc.* 7. 23, 26. compared with *Heb.* 11: 35. And indeed it was very *necessary* that then this Article should be more clearly revealed to fortify the *Jews* against those many Persecutions whereunto they were exposed for the sake of their *Religion*, that they might not be terrified to *apostatize* from it by those *cruel* Martyrdoms which in the Time of the *Maccabees* they many of them endured; and besides, now the Time of the *Gospel* was approaching, and consequently

sequently its Mysteries, like the Light of the *rising Sun*, began to break forth *clearer and clearer* from under that Cloud of *Types* wherein it was wrapt and involved, till at last the *Sun of Righteousness* himself arose and dispersed those Clouds, and brought *Life and Immortality to light by the Gospel*. But as for the *Sadducees*, who give no heed to the *Cabala*, or *Traditional Law*, in which this Doctrine was first discovered, and adhered only to the *written Law of Moses*, they still continued Infidels in this Point, and believed neither *Angels* nor *Spirits*, nor the *Life to come*: So very obscurely was it represented in the *Types and Shadows* of the *Written Law*. But when once the *Eternal Word* came to tabernacle in our *Flesh*, he revealed this *great Article* so plainly and clearly to the World, that 'tis impossible for any one not to believe it that believes him to be the *Messias*, or *Incarnate Word*.

And thus you see by all these Instances what a *vast* Difference there was in respect of *Truth*, between Christ's tabernacling in our Nature, and in the Tabernacle of *Moses*. And now I shall conclude this Argument with two or three *practical Inferences*.

1<sup>st</sup>. He dwelt or tabernacled among us. ] From hence I infer the *high Authority of Christ*, and that *holy Religion* which he hath revealed to us. For to tabernacle among us, as I have already shewed you, signifies to dwell in the midst of, as the *Shechinah*, *Presence*, or *Representative* of the most *High God*, as one that acted in his Father's Person, and was vested with his Authority, and consequently as one who hath as *great a Right* to exact our Obedience as the *Eternal Father* himself,

should he have come down from *Heaven* in his own Person to give Laws to Mankind. For so when the *Eternal Word* went before the Camp of *Israel* as the *Shechinah*, or *Angel of God's Presence*, God requires them that they should obey him as himself; *Beware of him, and obey his Voice*, saith God; *provoke him not, for he will not pardon your Transgression, for my Name is in him*, *Exod. 23. 21. and v. 22.* To obey the Voice of this *Angel* is interpreted to be the same thing, as to obey the Voice of the most *High God* himself; *But if thou shalt indeed obey his Voice*, saith God, *and do all that I speak, then I will be an Enemy to thy Enemies, &c.* So that for the *Israelites* to disobey this *Angel* (who, as I have proved to you, was the *Eternal Word*, or *Representative* of the most *High God* to them) was to all Intents and Purposes the same Thing as if they had disobeyed the most *High* himself. And accordingly our *Saviour* tells the *Jews*, *He that believeth on me, believeth not on me but on the Father that sent me*; that is, he doth not meerly believe on me, but on the Father too, whose Authority I have, and whose Person I represent; for so he explains himself in the following Verse, *He that seeth me, seeth him that sent me*; that is, I being my Father's *Shechinah*, or *Representative*, *Joh. 12. 44, 45.* And therefore as every Contempt of the *Deputy*, or *Vice-Governor*, is an Affront to the *Sovereign Prince* whose Person he bears, and by whose Authority he acts; so every Rebellion against *Christ* is an open Defiance to the *Sovereign God* whose Person he represents, and by whose Authority he reigns. Hence our *Saviour* tells the *Jews*, *Joh. 5. 23.* that *He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the*

*the Father which hath sent him ; which plainly intimates that God the Father resents those Indignities which we offer to Christ and his Laws, as if they were done to his own Person, and that if himself should speak to us from the Battlements of Heaven, or proclaim his Law to us in a Voice of Thunder, he would not be more displeased to hear us openly declare that we will not obey him, than he is to see us trample upon the Laws of his Son which he hath stamp'd with his own Sovereign Authority. So that if we were not infinitely foolhardy, methinks we should never dare to violate our Religion, in which the Authority of the most High God is so immediately concerned. For whatsoever our Religion requires of us, it requires in his Name who hath an undoubted Right and Authority to command us ; for from all Eternity he was invested with an absolute and unlimited Power of doing any thing that is not unbecoming his Divine Perfections, and in this the Right of his Dominion over us is originally founded. For he that hath Power must needs have a Right to exercise it so far as it is just and becoming his Nature, otherwise his Power would be altogether in vain ; and therefore since God from all Eternity hath a Power of doing whatsoever he pleases so far as is consistent with his Holiness and Goodness, there is nothing can be pretended against the Right of his Dominion and Authority over us: For God cannot but have an eternal Right to exercise his own Power, and he cannot but have an immutable Right to exercise it over his own Creatures. And as from all Eternity he had Power to do whatsoever was just and becoming him, so from his creating of us*



it became most *just* and *becoming* that he should rule and govern us ; for we became *his* as soon as we were created by him ; all our Powers of Action were from him, and by that he hath acquired an *unalienable* Right in whatsoever we are able to do. We have nothing but what is *his* Gift, and therefore can do nothing but what is *his* Debt ; we received *all* from him, and therefore must owe *all* to him ; for by Right of Creation he is the *supreme* Proprietor of all our Powers and Faculties, and as such hath a *just* Claim to all the Homage and Obedience that we are able to render him. So that as God's Dominion over us is originally founded in his most *absolute* Power to do whatsoever is *just* and *becoming* him ; so the Justice and Becomingness of his Dominion over us doth immediately result from his creating of us, by which he hath *for ever* intitled himself to all the Obedience we can render him. And by Virtue of this *immutable* Title doth he claim our Obedience to the Laws of *Jesui Christ*, whom next to himself he hath made our Prince and Ruler, having vested him with his own *Sovereign* Authority, and constituted him his *supreme* Representative in the *Church*. So that by disobeying his Laws we incur the Guilt of the most *monstrous* Injustice in the World ; we resume our selves from *him* to whom we owe our Being, and refuse to own *our selves* to be his Creatures from whose Bounty we receive even the Power of rebelling against him ; we alienate our Faculties from those *sacred* Uses whereunto they were designed and consecrated, and turn these *living* Temples of *God* into Dens of *impure* Thoughts and *silly* Lusts ; In a word, we fight against *God*  
with

with his *own* Gifts, and arm the Effects of his Bounty against his *Sovereign* Authority. And what do we think will be the Consequence of these Things? Can we be so *sottish* as to imagine that the *Almighty* Father will sit above in the *Heavens*, and see how his Laws are trampled upon, his Authority contemned, and exposed to Scorn and Derision by a Company of *impious* Wretches that owe their very Beings to him, and never be concerned at it? Do we think him so *stupid* a Being as that no Provocations will awake his Vengeance, that he will for ever sit *unconcerned* with his Hands in his Bosom whilst his *violated* Laws, like the Souls under the *Altar*, are continually crying out to him, *How long, O Lord, holy and true! dost thou not avenge our Quarrel upon the Heads of these audacious Rebels that every day trample us under foot, and have no more regard for our Authority than they have for the Whistling of the Wind!* For God's sake, Sirs, let us consider before it be too late what is like to become of us, what *probable* Hopes of Security we can propose to *our selves* if we persist in this *unjust* Rebellion. Gird up your Loins like Men, and I will demand of you in the Name of *God*, do you think that the *wise* Governour of the World will be for ever *insensible* of all the *rude* Affronts and Provocations you offer him? If so, pray where is his *Wisdom*, or in what Sense doth he govern the World, if he takes no care to secure his Laws by *punishing* Offenders, and lets his Subjects alone to do as they list? Or have you an Arm as *strong* as God's? Can you grapple with his *Almighty* Vengeance, or withstand the Stroke of his Thunderbolts? Sure such a *ridiculous* Conceit can never enter into any

*reasonable* Breast? and if not, in the Name of God what do you propose to *your* selves when you can neither hope for Favour from God, nor Security from *your* selves? Are you so *abandoned* of all your Reason as wilfully to shut your Eyes against your Danger, and run the *desperate* Venture of falling into the Hands of the *living* God? Hath not our *blessed* Lord most fairly warn'd us what we are to trust to? Hath he not told us how he *values* his Laws, and how dreadfully he will *punish* the Transgression of them? Hath he not most seriously protested to us that unless we do *repent* and *amend*, he will never forgive us either in *this* Life, or *that to come*; and that if we still persist in our Rebellions, he will at last banish us from his Presence *for ever*, and assign us our Portion with *Devils* and *damned Ghosts* in that Lake that burns with Fire and Brimstone? And hath he not taken it upon his Death that all this is true, when he so freely *sealed* his Doctrines with his Blood? And now after all this, is it possible we should be so *senseless* as to think we can be *safe* in our Wickedness, when God the Father is enraged both in *Wisdom* and *Honour* to avenge it as an Affront to his Authority, and God the Son hath revealed his Father's Wrath from *Heaven* against all Unrighteousness and Ungodliness of Men? and therefore as we value our own Safety, it concerns us either to submit to that *Divine* Authority which is stamp'd upon the Laws of our *Saviour*, or else to secure our selves of some Retreat or Sanctuary from that *Almighty* Vengeance which our Rebellion will certainly arm against us.

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2dly. He dwelt among us full of Grace. ] Hence I infer what *mighty* Encouragement we have to serve and obey our *blessed Master* who in his dwelling among us was full of every thing that can render his Service *lovely* or *desireable*, and abounded in all those *amiable* Graces that can oblige us to love and obey him. For what was there wanting in our *blessed Master* that any reasonable Subject can desire in his *Prince* and *Sovereign*? Would he desire a Prince of a *sweet* and *gracious* Temper, one that is full of Love and Tenderneſs to his Subjects? Such a one in the most *eminent* degree is our *blessed Lord*; for how doth the History of his Conversation upon Earth abound with the Expressions of a most *sweet* and *loving* Temper? For Love was the Principle of all his Actions, the Life and Soul of his Conversation, and in all that he did or spoke he made some new Discovery of his *unfeigned* Affection to the World; for he *went about doing good*, and his whole Life was nothing but one *continued Act* of Charity to Mankind. For still you find him either *instructing* the *Ignorant*, or *reproving* the *Erroneous*, or *comforting* the *Dejected*, or *feeding* the *Hungry*, or *curing* the *Sick* and *Diseased*. From Morning to Night he was constantly engaged in *one good Action* or *other*, and the whole Race of his Life, like that of the Sun, was spent in *enlivening* or *inlightning* the World. So *endearing* was his Behaviour that he obliged his very Enemies, and, when he had won them, treated them with all the Tenderneſs and Affection of a most *loving* Father towards his *dearest* Children. From all he conversed with he extorted Respect and Veneration, and none were able to resist the



Charms of his *victorious* Love, but those whose Hearts were harder than the *nether* Millstone. But that I may convince you of the *infinite* Goodness and Tenderness of his Nature, I will give you but that *one* Instance *Luke 19. 41.* And when he was come near, he beheld the City, and wept over it ; which, as you will see afterwards, was occasioned by the Fore-sight of its *approaching* Ruin and Destruction ; and yet at the same time he foresaw the Cruelties which those *barbarous* Villains were about to practise upon him, how they would scourge his Body with *knotty* Whips, and nail his Hands and Feet to the Cross, and thrust a Spear into his Heart ; he saw how they would *triumph* over his Misery, mock at his Calamity, and dance to the Musick of his *dying* Groans. And now one would have thought such a Prospect as this would have for ever enraged his Soul against them, and made him rejoice to see that *sweeping* Destruction that was coming upon them ; but such was the *incomparable* Sweetness of his Temper, that while he *foresaw* them plotting his Ruin, he could not but sigh over *theirs*, and while he beheld their Malice all *reeking* in his Blood, and sporting it self with his Torments and Agonies, yet at the Sense of their *approaching* Destruction his very Bowels *earned*, and his Heart *melted* with Commiseration, and he could not forbear weeping to think that those *curst* Instruments of all his Miseries must e're long be so *wretched* and *miserable* themselves, earnestly wishing that they who so greedily thirsted for his Blood had known *in that their day the things which belong to their Peace.* And though one would have thought the *barbarous* Entertainment he met with  
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here upon Earth would have *for ever* quenched all his Affection to Mankind, yet still it lives, and in despite of all the Affronts and Outrages he endured, burns as vigorously in his Breast as ever. So *unconquerable* was his Love to his Subjects, that all the *bloody* Cruelties they practised upon him, when they chased him out of the World, were never able to *alienate* his Heart and Affections from them; but after all their Cruelties he still retained his Fatherly Bowels towards them, and when he could endure their Torments no longer, breathed out his *loving* Soul in an *earnest* Prayer for their Pardon, *Father forgive them, for they know not what they do.* And now that he is in Heaven among *Angels* and *glorified Spirits*, where he cannot but remember how unkindly we treated him when he was upon *Earth*, and perhaps doth still bear upon his *glorified Body* those very Wounds which he received from our Hands, which one would think were *sufficient* to incense him against us *for ever*; yet his Heart is the *same* towards us, full of all those *kind* and *tender* Resentments that first brought him down from Heaven, and render'd his Conversation among us so full of Sweetness and Endearments. And now being so infinitely kind as he is, why should we be disheartned from serving him? Methinks the Sense of his Love to us, if there were no *other* Argument in the World, should be *sufficient* to bind us to his Service *for ever*. For, *O my Soul, how can I do too much for so kind a Friend! How can I be too submissive to so good a Master! That is so infinitely tender of all his Servants, and loves them a thousand times more than they love themselves! Sure if we had any Spark of*

of Ingenuity in us, the Sense of his *matchless* Kindness towards us, would be *sufficient* to turn all our Duty to him into Recreation, to make us thirst after his Service, and catch at all Opportunities of expressing our Loyalty and Obedience to him: We should embrace his Commands as Preferments to us, and wear them as the *greatest Favours*, and think our selves more *honoured* in being the Servants of *Jesus Christ*, than in being made *mighty Kings* and Potentates.

2. Consider, as he is *full* of Grace, in Respect of his own *Personal* Disposition, so he is also in Respect of his Laws, in which, as I have already shewed you, he requires nothing of us but what is for our *Good*, nothing but what tends to the Perfection of our Natures, and the Consummation of our Happiness. All that our *Saviour* requires at our Hands, is only that we should act according to the Laws of a *Reasonable Nature*, and constantly pursue the great End of our Creation, which can never be obtained by us, unless we regulate our Actions by those *wise* and *excellent* Rules which he hath prescribed us, and which he hath prescribed us upon no *other* Inducement, but only to oblige us to be *happy*. For as to any Advantage that will accrue to him from our Actions, 'tis altogether *indifferent* to him whether we obey him or no; for he was always infinitely *happy* within himself, and would have always been so, though we had never had a Being; so that his Felicity depends not upon us; and were it not that the *superabundant* Goodness of his Nature doth *for ever* incline him to make *us* happy as well as *himself*, he would never have concerned himself about us, but would have

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have let us alone to do as we list, and abandoned us to the Fate of *our own* Actions. He therefore being infinitely *happy* within himself, can have no self-Ends to serve upon his Creatures; because within the Circle of his own *divine* Being, he hath all that he needs, and all that he desires; but being infinitely *good*, as he is infinitely *happy*, we are sure that our Good must be the only End of his intermeddling with our Actions, and his giving Laws to direct them. And if we consult the *particular* Laws which he hath given us, we shall find they all of them most naturally tend to *perfect* and *rectify* our *disordered* Natures, to *exalt* and *spiritualize* our Affections, and inspire us with all those *divine* Dispositions that are requisite to qualify us for the Happiness of the World to come. And now methinks, if we had any Sense of *our own* Interest, this Consideration should mightily encourage us to Obedience, to think that while we are serving our *blessed Master*, we are serving ourselves to the *best* Purposes, and that his Service, and our Interest are so combined and united, that by the same Actions we may gratify *him*, and do *our selves* the *greatest* Kindness in the World; that he exacts nothing from us, but what he was obliged to do by the *infinite* Care and Concern he hath for us; and that he had been less *kind*, should he have required *less*, and must necessarily have subtracted from us some Degree of our Happiness, should he have abated us any Part of our Duty. O *Blessed Jesus*, who can complain of thy Service, when thy very Commands are Tokens of thy Love; when all the Duty thou requirest of us, is only to be *kind* to *our selves* in doing those things, which



if thou hadst never commanded, *our own* Interest would have obliged us to, had we but understood it as well, or regarded it as much as thou dost?

3. But then consider again, as He is *full of Grace* to us in his own *personal* Temper, and in those *mild* and *gentle* Laws which he hath given us; so *Thirdly*, He is *full of Grace* to us also in respect of that *gracious* Pardon and Forgiveness which he hath procured for, and promised to us if we will heartily repent and amend. I confess, though his *Personal* Temper should be never so *sweet*, and his Laws never so *gentle*, yet if he should, upon every *wilful* Offence, exclude us from all Hope of Pardon, it might justly discourage the Generality of Men from engaging any farther in his Service; because *more or less*, we have all sinned, and fallen short of the Glory of God. So that if upon every *wilful* Act of Rebellion, we should stand *for ever* excluded from his Favour; we should generally be left in a *desperate* Condition, and then to what Purpose should we serve him any longer, when by all our *future* Loyalty and Submissions, we must never hope to be readmitted into his Grace and Favour? To remove this *great* Discouragement therefore, the *blessed* Jesus hath obtained for us this *publick* Grant and Charter of Mercy from his Father, that if now at last we will repent and amend our Ways, notwithstanding all our *past* Rebellions, we shall find Mercy, and be as freely received into his Grace and Favour, as if we never had offended him; and this *merciful* Grant he hath published to us in the Promises of his Gospel: So that now we cannot make the *least* Doubt of our Pardon and Acceptance with him, upon our *unfeigned*

*feigned* Repentance, without calling his Truth and Veracity into Question. And now what *reasonable* Cause of Discouragement have we from returning to the Service of our *blessed Master*, when we are so amply assured that our *past* Disobediences to him shall, upon our Return, be forgotten *for ever*? For, in the Name of *God*, what can we desire more? Is it *reasonable* that the *wise* Governour of the World should pardon Offenders, whether they repent or no; that he should let them take their Swing in Wickedness, and never take any Cognizance of their Actions? Let us speak plainly; would we have him govern us or no? If not, we are infinitely *besotted*, that for the Sake of a *few paltry* Lusts that are our *Plague* and *Shame* would deprive our selves of all the Blessings and Benefits of his Government. But whatsoever we would have, it is by no means fit that he should surrender up his *just* Authority over us, because we are Fools and Mad-men; and if we think it fit that he should govern us, we cannot be so *senseless* as to think it *reasonable* that he should pardon our Sins till we repent of them; because by so doing he would give up all, and leave us *absolute* Masters of our selves. So that if we *our selves* had been called to the *Privy Council* of *Heaven*, to give our Vote to those Laws by which we were to be ruled and governed, doubtless we could not have had the Confidence to ask either *gentler* Laws or *greater* Indulgences than the *blessed Jesus* hath freely granted us in his *Gospel*. If *God* should have told us, that he would impose nothing on us without *our own* Consent, and bid us ask for our selves any thing that is *fit* and *modest*, doubtless the utmost

most that any *modest* Man could have craved, would have been only this; *Lord, if thou wilt be but so merciful as to give us such Laws as are suited to our Natures, and are conducive to our Happiness, and so far to consider our Weakness and Instability, as not to cast us away from thy Favour for ever upon every wilful Transgression, but to pardon and receive us again upon our unfeigned Repentance, this is all the Favour we would ask, and for this we would praise and adore thy Goodness for ever and ever.* Since God therefore out of his own Grace and Goodness, hath granted this Indulgence to us, why should we be discouraged from returning to our Duty, though we have never so notoriously violated and neglected it? For now we are fully assured that we can never be excluded from all Hope of Pardon, till we are past all Possibility of Repentance.

4. He is full of Grace to us also, in respect of that *abundant Assistance* which he hath promised and vouchsafed to us. I do confess, though notwithstanding our *former* Rebellions, he should be never so ready to receive us into Favour again upon our *unfeigned Repentance*; yet unless he will also assist us in our Repentance, and enable us to conquer the Difficulties of it, we have still very *great Reason* to be discouraged from his Service: For, by our own *evil Habits*, we have so disabled our selves from returning to our Duty, that without the Concurrence of a *supernatural Grace*, it will be in vain for us to attempt it: For he that from a State of *habitual Sin*, enters into a Course of Repentance, must strive all along against the Current of his Nature, which at first especially, and when he is *weakest*, will be so *swift and im-*  
*petuous*

petuous, that by *his own single* Strength, it will be impossible for him to *stem* or conquer it, and unless he be assisted by a *greater* Strength than *his own*, he will be inevitably *born down* and carried away with it, though he struggle never so vigorously against it; so that it is no Encouragement at all to the Service of *Christ*, that he will receive us to Pardon when we heartily repent, unless he will also enable us to repent by the Concurrence of his *Grace* with our *honest* Endeavours. But this Discouragement also he hath removed out of our Way, by making us a *publick* Grant and Promise of his *Grace* and Assistance; for he hath assured us that he will give his *holy Spirit* to every one that *asks* it, Luke 11. 13. that if we will *work out our own Salvation*, he will *work in us to will and to do*, Phil. 2. 12, 13. and that *to him that hath*, that is, improves that *Grace* which he hath, it shall be given more abundantly, Mat. 13. 12. so that though we cannot do all by our own *single* Strength, yet we can do so much as will oblige our *blessed* Master to enable us to do all; and therefore that we do not do all, is as much our Fault as if we could, because we are able to do *all* through *Christ*, who will strengthen us if we will but do what we can; so that this, methinks, should be sufficient to encourage any *reasonable* Man in the World to undertake his Service, to consider that he who is my Master, will *co-operate* with me, and proportion my Strength to the Work he enjoyns me; that he will not stand *still* with his Arms in his Bosom, and see me struggle in *vain* under an *insupportable* Burthen of Duties, but that he will set *too* his *own* Shoulders, and contribute his *own* Strength, and enable



enable me, by degrees, to undergo it with Ease and Alacrity ; so that though thro' the *Weakness* and *Impotency* which I have voluntarily contracted, my Duty is become *too heavy* for my Shoulders, yet I will never be disheartened so long as I am sure it is not *too heavy* for my Saviour's, for if I heartily endeavour, I am *confident* I shall undergo it, if it be in the Power of an *Almighty* Grace to enable me.

5. And lastly, He was *full of Grace* to us also, in Respect of that *glorious* Recompence which he hath promised to us, and prepared for us. I confess, were his Service all Work, and no Wages, there were some Reason to be disheartned ; but when he hath promised, and so amply assured us, that after we have spent a few Days or Years in his Service upon *Earth*, he will receive us into the Participation of *his own* Joys, where we shall commence as *happy* as it is possible for an *everlasting* *Heaven* to make us, methinks we should kiss his Yoke, and court his Service, and think we can never do too much for such a *bountiful* Master, who rewards all his Servants with such *immortal* Preferments : For what is the Labour of a few Moments, compared with that *everlasting* Rest and Pleasure wherein it shall shortly terminate ? And when once we are arrived to the *Heavenly Canaan*, and have tasted those *ravishing* Delights with which it flows and abounds, how *light* and *inconsiderable* will all these Difficulties in our Voyage appear to us, which now do so startle and affright us ? How shall we wonder at *our own* Sloth and Faint-heartedness, to think that ever we should be such *wretched* Cowards as to be afraid of any thing that hath

hath *Heaven* at the End of it, which is a Happiness so *vast* and *unspeakable*, that the Hope of it is *sufficient* to turn Torments into Recreations; How shall we be astonished at *our selves*, to think that we could ever be such *wretched* Fools as to deliberate *one* Moment, whether *Heaven* were *preferable* before all the Pleasures of Sin, or whether it were more *eligible* to dwell with *Harlots* and *Drunkards* for a Moment, and wallow in their *beastly* Pleasures, than to enjoy the Society of *God*, and *Saints*, and *Angels*, to all *Eternity*? The Odds will then appear so *vast*, and the Disproportion so *unspeakable*, that we shall wonder how we could ever be so *senseless* as to make a Comparison between them. Sure Sirs we do not believe that *Heaven* is the Recompence of Christ's Service; for if we did, methinks we should more heartily engage in it. For could we stand thus *deliberating* upon the Shore, whether we shall bid adieu to our Lusts, take Leave of all their *fulsome* Pleasures, and imbarck *our selves* in the Service of our *Saviour*? Could we stand pausing *thus* as we do, whether we shall venture into those *petty* Storms that are like to attend us in our *spiritual* Voyage, did we verily believe that a *few* Leagues Distance lies that *blessed* Shore where we shall be crowned as soon as we are landed with all the Joys than an *everlasting* *Heaven* means? Certainly the Belief of this is *sufficient* to put Life and Courage into the most *crest-fallen* Soul in the World, and to give her Spirit and Vigour enough to carry her triumphantly through all the *weary* Stages of her Duty. So that considering how, in all Respects, our *blessed* Lord abounds in Grace and Goodness to us, we have the *greatest*

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Encou-

Encouragement imaginable to engage us to his Service.

3dly. *He was full of Truth.* ] From whence I infer, that the *Christian Religion* is a very plain and intelligible thing. For this, as I have shewed you at large, is one of the great Notes of Distinction between Christ's tabernacling among the *Jews* and among *Christians*, that whereas among the *Jews*, he was full of obscure Types and mystical Representations; among us *Christians*, he is full of Truth; that is, he is plain, and open, and clear, without any dark Reserves or Mysteries; now he hath plainly revealed that which before he did so obscurely decypher; now he hath unriddled all those mystical Types, and turned them as it were inside outwards, and given us their hidden Sense and Meaning in plain and naked Propositions; and of these our holy Religion is composed. So that those Doctrines which before were all *Mystery*, whilst they lay obscurely couched under the Types and Figures of the Law, are now brought forth from behind the Curtain into the open View of the World, and presented barefac'd to our Understandings in the most plain, and easy, and familiar Sense: Not but that *Christianity* hath some Mysteries in it still, whose Depths we are not able to fathom; but 'tis not because *Christ* hath not revealed them, but because our Understandings are incapable of comprehending them; such are the Doctrines of the *Holy Trinity*, the *Incarnation* of our blessed Saviour, and the *Hypostatical Union* of the *Divine* and *Humane* Nature in him: Nor indeed is it much to be wonder'd at, that we, who with all our Wit and Reason, are not able to explicate the Mysteries of a  
Mite,

*Mite, or Flea, of a Plant or a Stone, or any of those innumerable things that are before us, should not be able to understand such incomprehensible, to order such infinite, or define such ineffable things; but though we cannot comprehend the Modes, nor understand the strict Philosophy of them, yet if we would but strip them out of their false Disguises into their original Plainness and Simplicity, we might doubtless easily disentangle them from all Repugnancy and Contradiction, which is sufficient to render them rationally credible, they being contained in that excellent Religion, whose Truth is demonstrated by such abundant Evidence. But perhaps, as God continued all the Doctrines of Christianity in a Mystery among the Jews, and reserved the clear Revelation of them to the coming of the Messiah; so for the same Reason he hath still reserved the clear Discovery of those Doctrines which are still Mysteries to us Christians, for the future State, and then it may be we may as fully understand these, as the believing Jews (after the Coming of Christ) did those other Doctrines of the Gospel, which before were all Mysteries to them. But, God be praised, whatsoever is necessary to make us good and happy, is now so plainly discovered to us, that we cannot be ignorant of it unless we wilfully shut our own Eyes. We need not dive into mystical Senses, or grope after Truth among Shadows and Umbrages, as the good Jews were fain to do under the Mosaick Dispensation, all that is necessary to our Salvation being written as it were upon the very Surface of our Religion, and openly exposed to our View in plain and literal Proposals. And yet notwithstanding the Plainness and Simplicity*



city of the *Christian Religion*, there are too many both among *our selves*, and in the *Church of Rome*, who have industriously set themselves to resolve all its Doctrines again into Darknes and *unintelligible Mysteries*, having, instead of the *plain Propositions* of our *Saviour*, introduced a *new-fashioned Mystical Divinity*, made up of nothing but certain *empty Schemes* of *effeminate Follies* and *wild Enthusiasms*, which are impossible for any Man to understand that cannot *conjure* for the Meaning of them. And those Doctrines which our *Saviour* purposely delivered in the most *plain* and *literal* Sense, that so the *meanest* Understanding might be instructed by them; these Men have blown up like so many Bubbles into *swelling Mysteries*, which, being strip't of those *glittering Allusions*, and *pompous Metaphors*, wherein they are clothed, vanish immediately into Air, or sink into *flat* and *empty* Nonsense. For thus the Doctrine of *Faith*, and *Repentance*, and *Justification*, which lye as *plain* in the *Scripture* as Words can make them, are by their Divinity render'd more *obscure* and *mysterious* than ever they were whilst they were couched under the *Types* and *Figures* of the *Law*, more of the *true Nature* being discovered in *Circumcision*, and the *legal Washings* and *Attonements*, than in a *hundred Volumes* of *modern Systems of Divinity*. For, whatsoever is *intelligible*, they look upon as *earnal*, and till they have subtilized it into some *unaccountable* Mystery, it is not *spiritual* enough to be admitted into their *System of Divinity*, as if they thought it below the *Majesty of Religion* to expose it self to the View of the World, and there was no Way to secure it from Contempt, but to lock it

it up in Mysteries and Obscurities; for else to what Purpose should they wrap it round with Clouds as they do, unless they design to make a Trade of it, and so draw a Curtain before it, as Men do before their *Puppet-Plays*, that so they may get Money by shewing it: For 'tis apparent that *Religion* it self suffers extremely by it; for whilst they thus *spiritualize* it into Air, and do, as it were, *juggle* it out of Sight in the Clouds of their *mystical* Nonsense, they render it extremely *suspicious* to all that are *wise* and *inquisitive*, and will not suffer themselves to be imposed upon by the Trains of their *mysterious* *Gibberish*. And as for their more *credulous* Followers, whilst they thus lead them by the Nose through a Vally of *Shades* and *Darkness*, they utterly deprive them of the *vigorous* Warmth and Comforts of *Religion*, for how should they know how to make use of the Arguments and Motives of *Christianity*, when those *excellent* Doctrines from whence they are deduced, are wrap'd in *unintelligible* Mysteries? For how should they draw forth from the Articles of their Faith, those *Practical* Principles that are lodged in them, when those Articles are converted into Riddles, which they do not, nor cannot understand? Thus, by turning *Christianity* into a *Mystery*, they do not only thwart the Design of our *Saviour*, which was to bring it forth from under the *mysterious* Representations of the Law, and propose it to the World in the most plain and *intelligible* manner; but they also *dispirit* *Religion* it self, whose Life and Energy consists in being understood, and expose it to the Contempt and Scorn of those that have Wit enough to de-

test the Follies of their *Enthusiastical* Mysteries.

*4thly.* And lastly, *He dwelt among us full of Grace and Truth.*] From hence I infer the Inexcusableness of those Men that persist in their Disobedience to the *Gospel* now that our *blessed Lord* hath expressed so much Grace towards, and so clearly made known his Mind and Will to us. What Excuse can we urge to palliate our *wretched* Disobedience? If you will but imagine your selves for a little while to be standing before the Tribunal of your *Saviour*, where e're it be long you must all appear, I will briefly draw up what in Probability will be your Plea, and what may be reasonably presumed will be his *Answer*. ' In the Name of *Jesus* then ' let me demand of you, what can you plead for ' your selves why that *fearful* Doom which he ' hath pronounced against you, should not be ' pass'd upon you? *Why, Lord, we know that thou wer't an austere Man, that thou would'st exact of us to the utmost Punctilio, and that if ever we fail'd in the least Circumstance of our Duty thou would'st immediately let loose thy implacable Vengeance upon us, and this utterly disheartned us from thy Service considering how impossible it was for us to please thee.* ' Ah ' wretched Creatures! can you have the Face to ' charge me with Rigour and Severity, who have ' had so many *notorious* Experiments of the Sweetness of my Nature, and Tenderness of my Affections towards you? What *one* Action was I ' ever guilty of in all my Conversation among ' you that could give you the *least* Suspicion that ' ever I would prove an *austere* Master to you, or ' that I would not be ready to construe you in the ' most *favourable* Sense, and to pity and pardon ' you

‘ you wheresoever you were excusable? Did I  
‘ ever give you *any* Occasion to think that I was  
‘ of a *peevish* or *captious* Nature, apt to be pro-  
‘ voked with Trifles? Yea, had you not all the  
‘ Reason in the World to conclude from the *Sweet-*  
‘ *ness* of my Temper that I would be always rea-  
‘ dy to consider your *Infirmities*, and pity your  
‘ *Weaknesses*, and judge you by the Measures of a  
‘ Friend? And do you now pretend that it was  
‘ the Dread of my Severity that disheartned you  
‘ from my Service? *But, Lord, the Laws which*  
*thou gavest us were so intolerably burthensom that nei-*  
*ther we nor our Fore-fathers were able to bear them:*  
*We would willingly have obeyed thee if it had been pos-*  
*sible, but when we saw thy Burthen exceeded our*  
*Strength, we concluded it was in vain for us to attempt*  
*the bearing it.* ‘ O ungrateful Rebels! dare ye ac-  
‘ cuse me of Tyranny when you know in *your own*  
‘ Consciences I never imposed any Law upon you  
‘ but what had a *necessary* Tendency to your Hap-  
‘ piness, and was so far in its *own* Nature from be-  
‘ ing a Burthen to you, that it commanded no-  
‘ thing but what would have been an Ease and  
‘ Refreshment? and if you can produce any *one* of  
‘ my Commands that obliged you to any thing  
‘ but to be *kind to your selves*, or convince me that  
‘ I could have enjoyned *less* upon you without be-  
‘ ing *less kind or merciful* to you, I will freely ad-  
‘ mit of your Plea as *just*, and immediately par-  
‘ don all your Disobediences against me. But  
‘ when all my Laws are Instances of my Love to  
‘ you, and Expressions of my Zeal for your Wel-  
‘ fare, who but such *Monsters* of Ingratitude as  
‘ your selves would ever have charged me with



‘ Tyranny and Oppression? But, Lord, thou knowest we are fickle and mutable Creatures; and though we did heartily resolve that we would never revolt from thy Service, yet through the many Temptations that perpetually solicited us, we were at last seduced into a Rebellion against thee: And though when we reflected upon what we had done, we were full of Sorrow and Remorse, and wish’d from our Souls that we had never done it; yet then, being desperate of Mercy, and past all Hopes of Pardon, we concluded that it was too late to repent, or to think of returning to our Duty again. ‘ Ah unworthy Wretches! with what Confidence can you impute the Continuation of your Rebellion against me to your Despair of ever finding Mercy at my hands, when you know in your own Consciences that I died to procure Forgiveness for you, and that by my Death I obtained an Act of Indemnity and Oblivion for all that would come in, and return to their Duty upon the Proclamation of my Gospel? When you cannot but know that I tender’d you your Pardon sealed with my own Blood, and courted you to accept of it; and though time after time you scornfully refused and rejected it, yet in hope that at last you might be prevailed with, you know how long I waited upon you even till you had tired out my Patience, and I saw there was no Remedy? And do you now charge your not returning to your Duty upon your Hopelessness of Pardon for your former Rebellions? ’Tis true, Lord, we cannot deny but thou didst offer us Pardon; but, alas, it was upon an impossible Condition, even upon a hearty Repentance, and a thorough Reformation, which thou knewest we were not then able to perform. For by  
a long

*a long Custom of Rebellion against thee, we had contracted so many inveterate evil Habits, which had so weaken'd and debilitated our Powers, that we were no more able to reform and amend our selves than the Leopard is to change his Spots, or the Ethiopian his Skin : To what Purpose then should we attempt Impossibilities, or set our selves to wrestle with Difficulties which we knew we were never able to surmount ? ' But  
' pray, how did you know that it was impossible  
' for you to repent when by all the Arguments I  
' used with you, I could never persuade you to  
' make Trial of it ? You know in your own Consciences that there are many things that you could  
' do ; you could have betaken your selves to a  
' serious Consideration of the Duties and Motives  
' of Religion ; you could have attended, and abstained at least from the outward Acts of Sin,  
' and humbly implored my Grace and Assistance ;  
' and that to encourage you to do this, and what  
' else was in your Power, I gave you the most  
' ample Assurance in the World that I would back  
' and enforce your Endeavours with the Aids of  
' my Grace, and in despite of all opposition  
' crown them with Success. So that though by  
' your own single Strength indeed you could never have effected your Repentance, yet it was  
' far from being impossible to you, since you knew  
' that by doing what was in your power, you  
' should infallibly oblige me to enable you to do  
' all the rest. But, blessed Lord, what Encouragement had we to repent and return to our Duty ? for if  
we had done it, we must have bid adieu for ever to all  
those Pleasures and Delights by which we were invited  
and detained in the Service of our Lusts ; and Thou  
offered'st*

offered'st us nothing in exchange for them, but only Sighs and Tears, with other ungrateful Rigours of a bitter and severe Repentance. How then canst thou blame our Disobedience against thee, when we had so many inviting Temptations to it, and so little Encouragement to the contrary? *O prodigious Impudence!* with what Face can you assert such a notorious Falshood when you know in your own Consciences that besides all those Pleasures that are connatural to my Service, and which do vastly exceed all the Pleasures of Sin, I laid an immortal Crown at your Feet, and faithfully promised you that if you would but spend a short Life in my Service, I would at the End of it receive you into that blissful State where you should be happy beyond all your Wishes, and to the utmost Capacity of your Nature; where you should live with God and Angels in the most rapturous Exercise of everlasting Love and Joy, which one would have thought had been sufficient to recompence you for those silly Pleasures for whose sake you deserted me and my Service. But since you have trampled upon all my Offers, and would by no means be perswaded by all those mighty Tenders I have made you, Go ye deservedly cursed into ever--- Hold, Lord, we beseech thee, and before thou passest thy irrevocable Doom upon us, hear this last Petition we shall make for our selves: We now confess that we are fully convinc'd (and O that we had understood it sooner!) what infinite Reason we had to adhere to thee and thy Service. It is our Misery that these things were not sooner discover'd to us, or at least that they were not so clearly discovered as to convince and perswade us. Had we but

but known what we now know, we would never have deserted thee as we did; and therefore we beseech thee have Pity upon our Ignorance, and impute not to our Wills the Faults of our Understandings, which are not in our Power to remedy. 'Why, is this the utmost that you can plead for your selves? Have I not told you all these things before-hand as plainly as Words could express them? Have I not instituted an Order of Men in my Church to explain these things to you, and to put you in mind of them? So that whatever you pretend, you could not but know and understand them; or if you did not, it was because you would not. And if you would wilfully shut your Eyes against the Light, it was *your own* Fault that you did not see, and you may thank *your selves* for the Consequents of it. I plainly told you where your Wickedness would end, and unless you were wilfully *blind* you could not but see what the Event of your Sin would prove, even while you were committing it; and you know in *your own* Consciences that this *fearful* Doom, which now you deprecate, you were fairly warned of when you might have easily avoided it by a *timely* Submission but you would not. And seeing you would be so *mad* as to reject *Heaven* when it lay before you, and leap into *Hell* with your Eyes open, your Blood be upon *your own* Heads. For I have tried all the Arts of Love, and Methods of Kindness to reclaim you; and since you have render'd them all *ineffectual*, what remains but that you depart from me, like *accursed* Wretches as you are, into that *everlasting* Fire prepared for the *Devil* and his *Angels*.

And



And now, I beseech you, do not *your own* Consciences consent to the Justice and Righteousness of this Procedure? Is there any *tolerable* Plea you can urge at the Judgment-Seat of *Jesus Christ* which here hath not been fully answered? And if so, how *inexcusable* shall we be when we come to plead *our own* Cause in the *great* Assembly of Spirits? For when these Aggravations of our Disobedience shall be laid open, our Guilt will appear so *foul* and *monstrous* that we shall doubtless be condemned by the *unanimous* Vote of all the *Reasonable* World; and as soon as the *great* Judge hath pass'd his Sentence upon us, *our own* Consciences will be forc'd to eccho, *Just and righteous art thou, O Lord, in all thy Ways.* Wherefore as we would not be found *inexcusably guilty* when we come to plead for our Lives before the Tribunal of our *Saviour*, let us all be perswaded to return to his Service, and faithfully to continue in it, that so instead of *Goye curs'd*, we may hear from his Mouth that *welcome* Approbation, *Well done good and profitable Servants, enter into the Joy of your Master.*

III. I come now to the *last* Proposition in the Text, *viz. "And we beheld his Glory, the Glory as of the only Son of the Father."* In handling of which I shall do these two Things:

1. Explain to you what this Glory of the *Word* was which the *Apostle* tells us they beheld.
  2. Shew you that it was *the Glory as of the only begotten Son of the Father.*
1. What was the Glory of the *Word*, which the *Apostle* tells us they beheld? I answer in general,  
By

By this *Glory* here must be understood something that is *resembling* to the *Glory* of his dwelling in the *Tabernacle*; because, as I have already shewed you, the *Apostle* seems plainly to refer it, in that he doth not only tell us that the *Word* tabernacled among *us*, which alludes to his *Tabernacling* among the *Jews*; but he also tells us, that they saw his *Glory*, which alludes to that *Glory* of the *Lord* which the *Jews* beheld in that *ancient Tabernacle*. Since therefore the *Apostle* mentions this *Glory* of the *Word Incarnate*, by way of Allusion to the *Glory* of his *Divine Presence* in the *Tabernacle*, it must necessarily bear some *Resemblance* or *Proportion* to it; because else it would be no *proper Allusion*. The best Way therefore for us to discover what this *Glory* of *Christ* was which they beheld, is to consider wherein the *Glory* of the *Divine Presence* in the *Tabernacle* did chiefly discover it self; and that, you shall find was in these four Things: *First*, In a *bright and luminous Appearance*. *Secondly*, In exerting of an *extraordinary Power*. *Thirdly*, In giving *Laws and Oracles*. *Fourthly*, In *sensible Significations* of its own *immaculate Sanctity and Purity*. And in *Proportion and Correspondence* to these, the *Glory* of the *Word Incarnate* also must consist in these four Things:

1<sup>st</sup>. In the *visible Splendor and Brightness* with which his Person was arrayed at his *Baptism*, and more especially at his *Transfiguration*.

2<sup>dly</sup>. In Those *great and stupendous Miracles* that he wrought in the Course of his Ministry.

3<sup>dly</sup>. In the *incomparable Purity and Goodness* of his Life.

4<sup>thly</sup>

ably. In the *surpassing* Excellency, and Divinity of his Doctrine.

1<sup>st</sup>. That Glory of the *Word* which St. *John* and the *Apostles* beheld, consisted in that *visible* Splendor and Brightness with which his Person was arrayed at his *Baptism*, and more especially at his *Transfiguration*; in Resemblance to that *visible* Splendor and Brightness in which he appeared in the *Mosaick Tabernacle*, where it is frequently said that the Glory of the Lord abode and appeared; as you may see *Exod.* 24. 16. & 40. 34. Which Glory t's evident discovered its self in an *extraordinary visible* Splendor that shone from between the *Cherubims*, and diffused it self thence all over that *sacred* Habitation. And accordingly in *Ezek.* 43. 2. it is said, that *the Glory of the God of Israel came from the Way of the East, and the Earth shone with his Glory*; which denotes that it was *extraordinary bright and luminous* since the Earth shone with the very Reflection of it. And in this same *glorious* Splendor was *Christ* arrayed first at his *Baptism*, and afterwards at his *Transfiguration*. For at his *Baptism* it is said, that *the Heavens were open'd unto him, and that he saw the Spirit of God descending like a Dove, and lighting upon him, Matth.* 3. 16. where by the *Holy Ghost's* descending like a Dove, it is not necessary we should understand his descending in the Shape or Form of a Dove, but that in some *glorious* Form or Appearance he descended in the same manner as a Dove descends; and therefore St. *Luke* expresses it thus, *And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily Shape like a Dove upon him, Luke* 3. 22. that is, he descended in some very *glorious* and *visible*

*visible* Appearance, in the same Manner as Doves are wont to descend when they come down from the Skies, and pitch upon the Earth. But what that Shape was in which he appeared, is not here expressed ; but that which seems to be most *probable* is this, that the *Holy Ghost* assuming a Body of Light, or surrounded as it were with a Guard of Angels appearing in *luminous* Forms, came down from *above* just as a Dove with his Wings Spread forth is observed to do, and lighted upon our Saviour's Head ; and the Reason why I think so, is this, both because where-ever any mention is made of God's, or the Holy Ghost's appearing in an *indefinite* Form, it is always in a Body of Light and *visible* Splendor, of which I have given you sundry Instances ; and also because it seems to have been a very *early* Tradition in the Church that it was in a very *glorious* Appearance of Light that the *Holy Ghost* came down upon our Saviour : And therefore in the *Gospel of the Nazarens*, as *Grotius* observes, it's said that upon the Holy Ghosts Descent, *ἰδοὺς περιέλαμψε τὸν τόπον ὡς μέγα*, immediately a great Light shone round about the Place ; and *Justin Martyr*, speaking of our Saviour's Baptism, saith expressly, *πῦρ ἀνέφθη ἐν τῷ ἰορδάνῃ*, that there was a Fire lighted in the River Jordan ; that is, the Water, immediately after he was baptized in it, seemed to be all on Fire by the Reflection of that bright and flaming Appearance in which the *Holy Ghost* descended upon him ; so that while he wore this Crown of *visible* Light, his Head, as the Painters are wont to express it, was circled round with the Rays of that Glory in which he was wont to appear from between the Cherubims. And this Glo-  
ry



ry of his was questionless seen by many of the *Apostles*, who were *sundry* of them *Disciples* to *John the Baptist*, and so may reasonably be supposed to be present at the Baptism of our *Saviour*.

And as for his *Transfiguration* upon Mount *Tabor*, it is said, that upon it *his Face did shine as the Sun*, and that *his Raiment was white as the Light*; or as *St. Luke* expresses it, ὁ ἰματισμὸς αὐτοῦ λευκός ἐξασπέν-  
των; that is, his Raiment was like the Whiteness of a Flash of Lightning, *Luke* 9. 29. So that from Head to Foot he was all inrobed in a *visible* Glory, and covered with all that Brightness, and *dazzling* Splendor in which he was wont to appear in the Tabernacle of *Moses*. And accordingly you have mention made of a Cloud that over-shadowed the *three Disciples*, whilst *Jesus* remained in his *Transfiguration*, which is exactly agreeable with that Cloud that covered the Tabernacle of *Moses*, whilst the Glory of the Lord filled it, as you may see *Exod.* 40. 34. And that this *glorious* Transfiguration was a Part of that Glory of the *Word* which *St. John* here says they beheld, is evident, because *himself* was one of the *three Disciples* that were Eye-Witnesses of this *glorious* Scene, and it is expressly said of him and his Brethren, that they *saw his Glory*, and the two Men that stood with him. *Luke* 9. 32.

2dly. This Glory which they saw consisted in those great and *stupendous* Miracles that He wrought in the Course of his Ministry, in Proportion to that *extraordinary* Power in which the Glory of the *Divine Presence* discovered it self in the Tabernacle of *Moses*. For thus we find that it was from the Tabernacle that God exerted all that *miraculous*  
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Power by which he punished the Rebellions of the Jews, and wrought those *miraculous* Deliverances from them. 'Twas from the Tabernacle that he commanded the Earth to open, and swallow up *Corah, Dathan, and Abiram*, and that he sent forth that *devouring* Fire which consumed their *Two hundred and fifty* Accomplices. 'Twas from the Tabernacle that he smote the *false* Spies with the Plague, and sent forth an Army of *fiery* Serpents to destroy the *murmuring* Israelites. 'Twas by his Presence in the Tabernacle that he conducted them through the Wilderness, and drave their Enemies before them ; that he divided the River *Jordan* to open them a Passage into *Canaan*, and made the Wall of *Jericho* to fall flat at the Blasts of a few *Rams-horns*. And upon the Account of this *Miraculous* Power which he exerted from the Tabernacle, the Ark that was contained in it, and was the *special* Seat of his Presence, is called *the Ark of his strength*, *Psal. 132. 8.* and God is said to *send them help from his Sanctuary, and to strengthen them out of Sion*, where the Ark was repositd in the Sanctuary of the Temple, *Psal. 20. 2.* Thus also those Words are to be understood, *Psal. 80. 2. Before Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh, stir up thy strength, and come and help us ;* because the Ark, from whence God was wont to put forth his Strength in saving of *that* People, marched immediately before these *three* Tribes. And this was very well understood both by the *Israelites* and the *Philistines*; for when the *Philistines* had overthrown them, they desired that the Ark of the Lord might be fetched out of *Shiloh*, that so when it came among them it might save them out of the Hands of their

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Enemies, 1 Sam. 4. 3. And when the *Philistines* understood that the Ark was brought into their Camp, they were fore afraid, and cryed out, *God is come into the Camp : Wo unto us ; who shall deliver us out of the hands of these mighty Gods ? These are the Gods that smote the Egyptians with all the Plagues in the Wilderness, v. 7, 8.* From whence it is evident that they both look'd upon the Tabernacle as the Seat of God's *miraculous* Power, and this *miraculous* Power is called the Glory of God ; for thus when the Ark was taken by the *Philistines*, it is said that God delivered his Strength into Captivity, and his Glory into the Enemies hand, Ps. 78. 61. and his Glory, and the Miracles that he wrought from the Tabernacle in the Wilderness, are mentioned as *Synonymous* Terms, Numb. 14. 22. *Because all these Men have seen my Glory, and my Miracles which I did in Egypt, and in the Wilderness, &c.* So that it's evident, that he exerted his *miraculous* Power from the Tabernacle, and that this *miraculous* Power was his Glory.

And consonantly hereunto it was from the Tabernacle of *Humane* Nature wherein he dwelt, that the *Eternal Word* exerted that *miraculous* Power whereby he cured the Sick, calmed the Sea, and raised the Dead, vanquished the Devils, and wrought all his *miraculous* Works, which were so many and so great that they ravished his Friends with Joy to behold them, and struck Terror and Amazement into his Enemies ; for so it is said, that they were all amazed at the mighty Power of God that was in him, Luke 9. 43. And that when they saw how the Devils trembled, and fled before him, they marvelled, saying, *It was never so seen in Israel,* Matth. 9. 33. So that by their own Confession, that

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*miraculous* Power which he exerted in the Tabernacle of *Humane* Nature did far exceed that *miraculous* Power which he exercised in the Tabernacle of *Moses*. And this *miraculous* Power of his is also expressly called *his Glory*, *Joh. 2. 11. This beginning of Miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his Glory, and his Disciples believed on him.* So that as his *miraculous* Power was called his *Glory* when he tabernacled among the *Jews*, so it was also when he tabernacled in *Humane* Nature, and so by consequence this also was a Part of that *Glory* of his which his *Apostles* saw while he dwelt among them.

3dly. This *Glory* which they saw consisted also in the *surpassing* Excellency and *Divinity* of his Doctrine, agreeably to that Expression of his *glorious* Presence in the *Old Tabernacle*, viz. his giving Laws and Oracles to the *Israelites*. For thus we find that God told *Moses*, that he would meet him in the *Tabernacle*, and commune with him of all things, which he would give him in Commandment to the Children of *Israel*, *Exod. 25. 22.* And, *Numb. 7. 89.* you have the manner of his Communing with them described; for when *Moses*, saith he, went into the *Tabernacle*, he heard the Voice of one speaking unto him from off the *Mercy-Seat* that was upon the *Ark*, from between the two *Cherubims*. For *Christ*, as I have formerly shewed you, being the civil Prince or Sovereign of the *Jews*, the *Cherubims* were the Throne upon which he sat, and from whence he gave Laws and Directions for the Administration of the Affairs of his Kingdom: And accordingly he is said to dwell between the *Cherubims*, *Pf. 99. 1.* and to ride upon the *Cherubims*, *2 Sam. 22. 11.* and the Sanctuary wherein the *Cherubims*



were seated, is expressly called *the Throne of the Lord*, *Jerem.* 17. 12. because here it was that he sat in all his Majesty, and gave forth his Laws and Ordinances to the Kingdom of *Israel*. And this was an *eminent* Expression of the Glory of his Presence among them, because hereby he asserted his Sovereign Authority, and did publickly challenge to himself that Right to his *glorious* Power which from all *Eternity* was *inherent* in him. And hence the *Apostle* calls the giving those Divine Laws and Oracle a *glorious Ministration*, and plainly asserts it to be an Instance of the Glory of the *Divine Shechinah*, or Presence in the Tabernacle, when he grants that *the Ministration of Death* written and engraven in stone, was *glorious*, yea and that *Ministration* to be Glory in the Abstract, *2 Cor.* 3. 7, 9.

And in Correspondence hereunto did the *Divine Word*, when he tabernacled in *our* Natures, give forth *Divine* Laws and Oracles to the World; all which are yet remaining among us, and do contain in them the Substance of our *Holy Religion*; which being so *divine* and *godlike*, and altogether composed of the *purest* Laws, and most *Heavenly* Doctrines, is a most *proper* Instance of that Glory of the *Eternal Word* which the *Apostles* beheld, tho' not with the Eyes of their Bodies, yet with those of their Minds. For what can be more *glorious* in the Eye of *Reason* than those *illustrious* Discoveries which he hath made to us in his *Gospel* of the *Nature of God*, and the *Duty of Man*, and the *immortal* Recompences of the World to come, in which he hath so far exceeded whatsoever *Humane* Wisdom was able to discover of them, that all the *Philosophy* that ever was before him must confess it  
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selfeclipsed and out-shone by him, and all the *Philosophy* that ever *succeeded* him, hath been forced to derive and borrow *Light* from him : And accordingly we find his *Gospel*, in which his *Doctrines* are contained, stiled by the Name of the *glorious Gospel*, 2 *Cor.* 4. 4. which in Comparison with those *dark* and *confused* Discoveries which the World had formerly made, the *Apostle* resembles to the first breaking forth of the *Light* out of the *rude* and *obscure Chaos*, 2 *Cor.* 4. 6. For *God*, saith he, who commanded the *Light* to shine out of *Darkness*, hath shined into our *Hearts*, to give the *Light* of the *Knowledge* of the *Glory* of *God*, in the *Face* of *Jesus Christ* : where, by the *Face* of *Jesus Christ* : the *Apostle* seems plainly to allude to that *Divine* *Glory* and *Luster* with which *Moses's* *Face* shone when he came down from seeing the *Glory* of *God*, *Exod.* 33. 29. So that his *Meaning* is this, that as the *Children* of *Israel* with their *bodily* *Eyes* saw the *Glory* of *God* shining upon the *Face* of *Moses*, so they, the *Disciples* and *Apostles* of our *Saviour*, had far more clearly beheld with the *Eyes* of their *Minds* the *Divine* *Glory* displayed in his *Doctrine* and *Ministry*.

4thly. And lastly, This *Glory* of the *Eternal Word* which they saw, consisted also in the *incomparable* *Sanctity* and *Purity* of his *Life*, semblably to that *Expression* of his *glorious* *Presence* in the *Old Tabernacle*, viz. the *sensible* *Significations* he gave of the *immaculate* *Purity* and *Holiness* of his *Nature*. For by those *outward* *Cleanings* of all *Things* and *Persons* that did any ways belong to the *Tabernacle*, or did at any time approach it, he did openly represent and signify the *Purity* and *Sancti-*

ty of his *own* Nature, which being infinitely *separated* from all manner of *Impurity* and *Uncleanness*, cannot endure that any thing that is *filthy* or *impure* should approach it. For thus we read that the Tabernacle it self, and all the *Utenfils* of it, were to be *purified* and *sanctified* with Oyl before the Entrance of the *Shechinah*, or *Divine Presence*: So also the *High Priest*, the *Priests*, and the *People* were to be cleansed and purified before they were suffered to approach the *Holy Habitation*; and if at any time they had contracted any of those *legal Uncleannesses* that are specified in the Law of *Moses*, they were to be excluded from the Communion of the Congregation, and from all the Exercises of *Publick Worship* and Devotion, till they were cleansed and purified again: The Intent of all which was to signify to that People how *irreconcilable* his Nature was to all Impurity and Wickedness, that it could not admit of the Neighbourhood of any Evil, nor dwell within any Lines of Communication with it; for this is expressed in the very Reason why these *Legal Purifications* are so strictly required: *For I the Lord your God, am holy, Levit. 19. 2. For I the Lord which sanctify you, am holy, Levit. 21. 8.* Plainly intimating that the Intent and Reason of all those *Ceremonial Purifications*, was to signify to that *dull* and *stupid* People the *immaculate Holiness* and Purity of his *own* Nature, which is so infinitely removed from any thing that is *impure* and *unholy*, that he could neither communicate with, nor endure the Approaches of it. And in this 'tis evident he placed a great Part of the Glory of his *Majestical Presence* in the Tabernacle, since a great part of that *Religion* which he there instituted was

was intended to signify the Glory of his Holiness to them; and accordingly he is described to be *glorious in Holiness, Exod. 15. 11.*

And agreeably hereunto did the *Eternal Word*, when he tabernacled in *our* Natures, signify to the World the *unspotted* Purity of *his* Nature by that *incomparable* Example of Holiness which he gave in his Life and Conversation among us. For whereas before he express'd his Holiness by *Mystical* Types and *Ceremonial* Observances, he hath now signified it by a Life full of Virtue and Goodness, and a Conversation exactly conformable to the *eternal* Rules of Righteousness. For, as a Creature in respect of his *Humanity*, he never failed in the least Punctilio of that *Duty, Homage, and Devotion* which he owed to the most *High God* his Creator; as a Man, he never swerved either in his Passions or Appetites from the *strictest* Rules of *Sobriety and Temperance*; as a Member of *Humane Society*, he never was guilty of an *unrighteous* Action either towards his *Superiors, Inferiors, or Equals*; but all his Life was a *walking* Monument of Goodness, and his whole Conversation a most *perfect* Transcript of those *Divine and Heavenly* Laws which he gave to the World. So that he was all *glorious without* as well as *within*, his Practice being a *living* Comment and Paraphrase upon that *immaculate* Purity and Holiness which is the Glory of his *Divine* Nature. This therefore was doubtless a Part of that Glory which the Apostles beheld in the *Eternal Word*, even that *immaculate* Sanctity and Holiness of which he gave so many *glorious* Significations in the whole Course of his Conversation: And accordingly we find this his Purity and Holiness de-



scribed by the Name of the *Glory of the Lord*, 2 Cor. 3. 18. *But we all with open face, beholding as in a Glass the Glory of the Lord, are changed into the same Image, from Glory to Glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord*: Where it's plain that by the *Glory of the Lord*, must be meant his Holiness; because it is into the Image of *that* that we are transformed. So that the meaning of the Words is this, we all beholding the Holiness of *Christ*, which is his *Glory*, in the *Glass* of his *Doctrine* and *incomparable Example*, are transformed into the *Likeness* of it; and do gradually pass on from *one Degree* of this *Glory* of his Holiness to *another*, under the *Conduct* and *Assistance* of the *Spirit of Christ*.

And so I have done with the *first* thing proposed, which was to shew you what that *Glory of Christ* was which the *Apostle* here tells us they beheld.

2. I now proceed to the *second Branch* of my Discourse, which was to shew you that this was the *Glory* as of the *only begotten Son of the Father*; But before we proceed to the *Proof* of it, it will be *necessary* to explain this Phrase, ὡς ὡς μονογενὴς *the Glory as of the only begotten Son*. Which Word, *ὡς*, or *as*, is in *Scripture* taken *two Ways*, sometimes as a *Note of Similitude* or *Comparison*; so *Mat. 6. 10*, *Thy Will be done in Earth, ὡς ἐν ἑξουσίᾳ, as it is in Heaven*; that is, like as it is in *Heaven*; and if we take it in this *Sense*, then the *Meaning* of the Words must be this, *And we beheld his Glory which was like unto the Glory of the only begotten Son of the Father*; that is, like unto that *Glory* in which the *only begotten Son* was wont to appear when he dwelt

dwelt in the Tabernacle, and conversed with the *antient Patriarchs*. And in this Sense I have shewed you already how it was *as* the Glory of the *only begotten Son*, by shewing you the *great Agreement* and *Similitude* there was between the Glory of *Christ* when he dwelt in the Tabernacle of *Moses*, and in the Tabernacle of *our Nature*. And when I consider how plainly this Text doth allude to the *Shechinah* or *Divine Presence* of the *Word* in that *antient Tabernacle*, I am very much induced to think that we ought not to exclude this Sense of it, namely, that as he dwelt in the Tabernacle of *our Nature*, *like* as he dwelt in the Tabernacle of *Moses*; so that Glory of his which they beheld in the Tabernacle of *our Nature*, was like unto that Glory in which he appeared in the *antient Tabernacle*.

But then this Word *ὡς*, is sometimes also taken for a Note of *Confirmation*. So *Psal.* 73. 1. *ὡς ἀγαθὸς ὁ θεὸς*, Truly God is good to Israel. And thus *St. Chrysostome* understands it here, *ὡς ἐν ὁμοιότητι, ὡς ἐν παρὰβολῇ, ἀλλὰ βεβαιώσεως, &c.* It is not a Note of *Similitude* and *Comparison*, but of *Confirmation* and *unquestionable Distinction*; as if the *Evangelist* had said, we saw his Glory, such as *became* and was *fit* for the *only begotten* and *truly natural Son of God*. For my Part, I see no Reason why the Words may not be fairly understood in *both* Senses, since they are no Ways *opposite* to, nor *inconsistent* with one another; and if so, then this must be the Meaning of the Words; *We beheld his Glory which was like unto that Glory in which the only begotten Son appeared in the old Tabernacle, and which was such as was every Way becoming the only begotten Son to appear in.* The first  
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of which Senses I have proved to you already, that the Glory of *Christ* in the Tabernacle of *our* Natures was *like* unto his Glory in the Tabernacle of *Moses*; and therefore now I shall only prove the *second*, that it was such as *became* and was every Way worthy of the *only begotten Son of the Father*; and this I doubt not will plainly appear by considering the *several* Particulars of it.

1<sup>st</sup>. That *visible* Splendor and Brightness in which he appeared at his *Baptism* and *Transfiguration*, was such as *became* him, and was worthy of him. For in all Probability, that Splendor consisted of *Angelical Beings*, clothed in *bright* and *luminous* Bodies; because, as I have formerly proved to you, that Brightness in which he appeared upon the *Mount*, and which he displayed from between the *Cherubims*, was nothing else but those *Angels of Light*, or *ministring Spirits* which he made to appear as *Flames of Fire* round about him; and therefore that Train of Angels whom *Esay* saw filling the Temple, *Esay* 6. 1. our *Saviour* calls the *Glory of the Lord*, *Jo.* 12. 41. that is, that *visible* Glory in which the Lord appear'd from between the *Cherubims*. And if that *visible* Glory consisted in a Train of *Angels* appearing in *glorious* Forms, then there is no doubt but that *visible* Glory of our *Saviour* at his *Baptism* and *Transfiguration* was the same; since, as I have already shewed you, it is described by the *same* Name, and in the *same* Manner of Appearance; and if so, how well did it become the *only begotten Son* to be surrounded with the *illustrious* Guards of his Father's Court, and attended on with those *high-born* Spirits, whose Office it is to minister before the Throne of the  
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most *High* ? For never was the most *glorious* Potentate upon Earth, attended with such a *splendid* Train and Retinue, the *meanest* of which was far more *illustrious* than the *greatest* and most *high-born* Monarch in the World. So that as the most *High* God did, by a Voice from *Heaven*, both at his *Baptism* and *Transfiguration*, declare him to be his *beloved* Son ; so by the *glorious* Train of Attendants he sent him, he manifested the Truth of his Declaration ; for we must needs suppose him to be the Son of the most *High*, when we see the most *glorious* Beings in all the Creation, so willingly submit themselves to his Service and Attendance : And when we see the most *High* adorning his *Outside* with the *luminous* Bodies of Angels, we may reasonably conclude that there was a *Divinity* within, and that the *Jewel* was *God*, because the *Casket* was *Angels*. But whatsoever this *glorious* Splendor was in which he was clothed at his *Baptism* and *Transfiguration*, it was apparently such as very well became the *only begotten* Son, not only because, as the *Philosopher* saith, that if *God* would ever take upon him a Body, it would be certainly *Light*, which is a Vestment most *suitable* to his *Glory* and *Majesty* ; but also because that *miraculous* Splendor was an *infallible* Token of the Presence of the *Divinity* in him ; for it never was but where *God* was present ; and therefore it is called the *Glory* of *God*, it being the *inseparable* Concomitant of his more *peculiar* Residence. For thus, as I have shewed you upon the *Mount* and in the *Tabernacle*, it was a *visible* Demonstration of the *special* Presence of the *invisible* *God*, and wheresoever in all the *Old Testament*, any Mention is made of its Appearance,



pearance, you shall find that there *God* himself did peculiarly reside: And therefore it is not to be imagined that *God* would have communicated to our *Saviour*, this *inseparable* Token of his own Presence, unless the *Divinity* had resided in him. For *Jesus Christ* was the only Person upon whom this *visible* Glory descended; never did the Hand of *Heaven* put forth such a Robe and Diadem of Glory upon any person in the World, as this which our *Saviour* wore at his *Baptism* and *Transfiguration*, which plainly denotes that he was the only Person in whom the *Divinity* was *substantially* united, and did *essentially* dwell. So that as this *visible* Glory was a *certain* Token of *God's peculiar* Residence in the Tabernacle and Temple, so it was also of his *special* Presence in *Christ*; for the History of his *Baptism* tells us, that it did not only make a *transient* Appearance, but that it remained on him, signifying that the *Divinity*, whose Presence was denoted by it, had made him his Habitation and Place of *constant* Abode. For though that *visible* Glory after some Time disappeared and went off from him, yet the Thing signified by it, *viz.* the *Divine Presence*, always remained in him; for by that *outward* Glory he was clearly manifested to be the *Holy One of God*, the Tabernacle and Sanctuary in which *God* was, and where he had taken up his Residence *for ever*, that his *Humane* Nature was that *sacred* Temple where the *Divinity* intended to dwell, and from whence for the the *future* he would deliver all his Oracles, and communicate all his Blessings to Mankind. So that in this Respect this *visible* Glory was such as highly became the only begotten Son, because it plainly denoted

denoted that the Fulness of the *God-head* dwelt *bodily* in him, and had chosen him for his *Habitation* for ever; and therefore *John Baptist* tells us, that though he knew him not, yet this *God* had revealed to him, *Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. And I saw and bear Record that it was the Son of God,* Joh. 1. 33, 34. where you may observe, that though it was revealed to him only that he was the Person that should baptize with the *Holy Ghost*, upon whom the Spirit descended, yet he bare Record also that this Person was the *Son of God*, rationally concluding that this *visible* Glory, which was such an *infallible* Token of the *special* Presence of the *Divinity*, was never to be communicated to any but the *Son of God*. And it is very observable, that at both these Times, when our *Saviour* was arrayed in this *glorious* Splendor, he is declared by a Voice from *Heaven* to be the Son of God, it being the *Father's* Intention at once to manifest him to be his *Son* both by *Word* and *Deed*; and at the same time, when he declared him to be his Son, to array him in such a Glory as *became* the Dignity of his Person.

2dly. The *great* and *stupendous* Miracles that he wrought were such as *became* his *only begotten Son*. 'Tis true, it cannot be denied but several Miracles have been wrought by *meer* Men, they being authorized by *God*, and assisted by his *Almighty* Power; but so *many* and so *great* as our *Saviour* wrought were never performed by any *Mortal*. For as to the Number of them, they were more than ever were wrought by *Moses* and all the *Prophets* together; for, besides those that are recorded,  
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which were all performed within the Space of *four* Years at most, *St. John* tells us, that he wrought so many that the World could not contain the Records of them, *Joh. 21. 25.* which though it be an *Hyperbolic* Expression, yet denotes thus much at least, that the Number of them was so great that they were almost *innumerable*. And as to the Greatness of them, they did apparently exceed all that ever were wrought before in the World. For he did not only raise the Dead, but he raised *himself* also after he had been *barbarously* murdered by his Enemies. He made the *Winds* and *Sea* obey him, and with the Word of his Mouth vanquished the *Devils*, and drove them from their Habitations, and forc'd them against their Wills, and their Interest to acknowledge him to be the Son of God. And whereas the Miracles of *Moses* and the *Prophets* were most of them *noxious*, they being Acts of *Divine Vengeance* upon the *Wicked* and *Ungodly*, and consequently more apt to terrify than to oblige those that beheld them; the Miracles of our *Saviour* were all of them Expressions of his *unfeigned* Love and Good-Will to the World. For among all that *vast* Number of *wondrous* Works that he wrought, there is not *one* to be found by which any Man was ever prejudiced, unless it was his dismissing the Devils into the Swine of the *Gadarens*, which without all doubt he did in Kindness and Good-will to the Owners; who being so *cruel* to themselves as to prefer their Swine before their *Saviour*, it was great Charity and Mercy to deprive them of that which was so *apparent* a Hindrance to their Enjoyment of a far *greater* Good. So that all his *wondrous* Works were nothing but  
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Acts of Kindness and Beneficence ; for he went about doing Good, *curing* all that were *possessed* with the Devil, and *healing* all manner of Diseases. And whereas none of those that wrought Miracles before him could ever pretend to perform them by any *immanent* Power of their own, but had only a *transient* Power given them for the *present* Miracle, which they either obtained from God upon their Prayers and Supplications, or was given by God for the Execution of his *own* Will and Command ; the *blessed Jesus* had this Power subjected and abiding in him, so that he could exert it *when*, and *where*, and as *often* as he pleased ; and whether he were *absent* or *present*, with the Word of his Mouth he could do what he would ; yea, and many times he performed his *wondrous* Works without any Word or Sign intervening, even by a *silent* Virtue proceeding from that *miraculous* Power with which he was endued ; and of all his Miracles there is only *one* which he performed upon Prayer and Supplication to his Father, and that was his raising *Lazarus* from the Dead, the Reason of which he himself gives, *Joh. 11. 42. Because of the People which stand by, that they may believe that thou hast sent me* : Intimating that he did not offer up this Prayer to his Father with design to obtain of him a *new* Power of working Miracles, which he was already endued with in an *abundant* measure ; but that hereby I might signify to the People how *acceptable* I am to thee, and let them see that I do all my Works in thy Name. And that he had this Power, is evident in that he did so plentifully communicate it to his *Apostles* and *Followers*, which neither *Moses* or the *Prophets* were  
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ever able to do. For thus, *Luke 10. 19.* he expressly tells his *Seventy Disciples*, *Behold, I give you power to tread on Serpents and Scorpions*; and so also when he dismissed his *Twelve Apostles* into *Judea*, *Matth. 10. 8.* he bids them, *Go, heal the Sick, cleanse the Lepers, raise the Dead, cast out Devils; for freely ye have received, saith he, and therefore freely give.* From all which it is apparent how far the *miraculous Works* of our *Saviour* did exceed all those that ever were done before him; and being so *great and excellent*, so far *transcending* all that ever was done by any *Mortal*, they plainly demonstrated him to be the *Son of God*, and very well became the *Dignity* of his *Person*. For how could he have done all these *mighty Things* by a *Power immanent* in himself, had he not been the *Son of an Omnipotent Father*? And in what more *becoming* Way could he have expressed that *Omnipotent Power* which he derived from his *Father*, than in those *astonishing Miracles* of *Love* which he wrought in the *World*?

3dly. The *excellent* and *divine* Doctrine which he taught was such as became the *only begotten Son*. For certainly if we consider the *excellent* Frame and *Contrivance* of the *Christian Religion*, we cannot but confess it to be most *Divine* and *Godlike*, most *worthy* of that *infinite* Wisdom and *Goodness* from whence it was derived. For *Religion* in general is the means of advancing *Rational Beings* to that *Perfection* and *Happiness* for which the *great* Creator hath designed and intended them; and certainly never was there any *Religion* in the *World* more adapted to advance this *noble Design* of *God* than that which our *Saviour* hath taught:

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For as for its *Agenda*, what it requires to be done, they all consist in acting reasonably, and according to the Dignity of our Nature, in *thinking, speaking, and practising*; in *loving and hating, desiring and delighting, hoping and fearing*, as becomes *Reasonable Beings* placed in our Condition and Circumstances; and do require nothing of us but that we should regulate our Practice by the Rules of *Right Reason*, and direct all our Faculties and Affections to their *proper Ends and Objects*; and when we come to this Pitch, always to *think* that which is most *reasonable*, and always to *practise* what we think so, then we are advanced to the *topmost Round* of our Perfection, in which is founded the *utmost Happiness* we are capable of: So that in all the Course of our *Christian Practice* we are in a *direct Progression and Tendency* towards our Perfection and Happiness. And as for the *Credenda of Christianity*, the Doctrines it requires us to believe, they are all of them pregnant with the most *strong and vehement Motives* to engage us to the Practice of what it enjoins; Motives that have such a *Potent, I had almost said Omnipotent Force* in them, that 'tis *impossible* for any Man heartily to believe, and throughly to weigh and consider them, and not be effectually perswaded by them! Since therefore it was so highly convenient that the *Son of God in Person* should come down from *Heaven* among us, that so the Dignity of his Person might give Authority to that *Religion* by which the World was to be governed; and since he did come down upon this *honourable Errand*, it was impossible for him to have taught any Doctrine that could more effectually have promoted the *great*

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End of *Religion*, or more fully expressed his *infinite* Wisdom, and Goodness, and Zeal for the Welfare of the Souls of Men, than that which is contained in the *Christian Religion*, which is every way so adapted to make Men *good* and *happy*, so accommodated to the Nature and Condition of Mankind, that there is nothing could better *become* the *only begotten Son* to teach in the World, or that could be more *worthy* of all those *infinite* Perfections that are lodged in his Nature, and do speak him to be the most *genuine* Offspring of the most *High*. For so *excellent* was his Doctrine, that his very Enemies were astonished at the *Wisdom* that was given him, *Mark* 6. 2, 3. and wondred at the *gracious* Words that proceeded out of his Mouth, *Luke* 4. 22. Well therefore might he say of himself, *I am the Light of the World, he that followeth me shall not walk in Darkness, but shall have the Light of Life, Joh.* 8. 12.

4thly. And lastly, The *incomparable* Sanctity and Purity of his Life was such as very well *became* the *only begotten Son*. For as it was highly *convenient* that he should come down into the World, and in his *own* Person teach us that *Religion* by which he intended to govern us, that thereby he might stamp it with a more *awful* Authority; so to render it more successful, it was no less *convenient* that he should come down in *our* Natures, that therein he might be capable of practising what he taught us, and setting us an Example of what he would have us to do, that so we might see that he enjoined nothing upon us but what was *practicable*, and what did become the most *glorious* Person that ever did assume our Natures; that thereby we might be encouraged

encouraged to our Duty, and animated with a noble Emulation of treading in his blessed Footsteps. Since therefore all this was so highly *convenient*, and the *Son of God* in Compliance with this Convenience did actually assume *our* Nature, it was impossible for him to lead a Life that *better* comported with this Design of his *Incarnation*, or *better* became the Dignity and Excellency of his Person than he did. For now that he was become a Man, he was obliged to act *suitably* to his Nature; and should he have done any thing that was *unsuitable* to the State and Circumstances of his Nature, he would not have acted becoming himself. So that it was highly *convenient* that he should become a Man, and being a Man it was indispensably *necessary* that he should live like a *wise* and a *good* Man in the Condition and Relations wherein he was placed, and nothing could be more *worthy* of or *becoming* him, then so to do, though he was still the *only begotten Son* of the Father. For it is the Glory of *God* himself that he always acts most reasonably according to the State and Relations of a *God*; and therefore when *God* becomes Man by assuming *our* Nature to his *own*, it is his Glory to act most reasonably in the State and Relations of a Man. And thus did the *blessed Jesus* do in the whole Course of his Conversation upon Earth; for his Life was a most *exact* Pattern of all *humane* Virtues, in which all that is *ornamental* to *humane* Nature was represented in its *fairest* Colours: There you may see a *fair* Example of the most *ardent* Love to, and *constant* Dependance upon *God*, of the most *profound* Humility, and *perfect* Resignation to his *Heavenly* Will. There you may behold the Moderation of



*Humane Passions and Appetites set forth to the Life, and fairly delineated in its most exquisite Perfections; in a word, there you will find Loyalty and Submission to Superiors, Fidelity and Justice to Equals, Courtesy and Candor, and Condescension to Inferiors, universal Love, and an unbounded Charity to all practised to the Height and Exactness; and which way soever you turn your Eyes on this fair Monument of Virtues, you can discover nothing but what is lovely and adorable, and infinitely becoming the only begotten Son of the Father.*

Having thus explained and demonstrated the Proposition to you, I shall conclude with these four Inferences from this four-fold Glory of the Word which they saw.

1. They saw the glorious Splendor which invested his Person at his Baptism and Transfiguration: From whence I infer his Deputation from the most High God, and Father of all Things, to be his Representative and Vice-Roy in the Christian Church. For this visible Glory with which he was invested, was always the peculiar Character of the immediate Representative of God; and therefore by way of Appropriation it is called the Glory of God, and the Glory of the Lord; and wheresoever God, as Supreme Monarch and Governor, is represented as residing and taking up his Royal Habitation, there you always find him displaying himself in this visible Glory and Splendor. Thus when by the Eternal Word he was represented among the Jews as their supreme Lord and Governor, he always manifested his Majestick Presence among them by some bright and shining Appearance; the first Instance of which was his Appearance to Moses from out of the

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the *burning Bush* upon *Mount Sinai*, where he first acted under *God the Father* as *Sovereign King of Israel* in commissioning *Moses* to be their Captain and Leader out of *Egypt*; for here it is said, that he appeared in a flame of fire, *Exod.* 3. 2. that is, in a visible Glory that resembled the Brightness of a Flame of Fire. For this Mountain he had chosen for the Seat and Throne for his *Majestical Residence*, from whence he intended to give Laws to *Israel*, and to exert his *Royal Dominion* over them; and therefore here he appears in that visible Glory which was always the Character of the *divine King*, and immediate Representative of *God* to that People. And indeed if that be true which *Josephus* tells us, this Mountain was looked upon as the Habitation of *God* long before ever *Moses* came thither; for therefore, says *Josephus*, did *Moses* drive his Father *Jethro's* Flock thither to feed, because of all other Places it most abounded with

Pasture, *Ἡ αὐτὴ τὸ θεῶν ἔχον ἐνδιατε-  
λει αὐτῇ τὸν θεὸν οὐ κατανημθεῖαι  
πεύτερον, οὐ τολμώντων ἐμπαύειν αἱ  
αὐτὸ τῶν ποιῶν;* that is, *because*

*Jos. Antiq.* 1. 2.  
p. 60.

*it was famed that God dwelt there, which was the Reason that the Shepherds never durst to drive their Flocks thither, because of the Sacredness of the Place.* And if this Report were true, then it seems this Mountain was the Seat of the *Royal Residence* of the *Eternal Word* before ever *Moses* came thither, and consequently the Glory and Brightness in which *Moses* saw him appear, was nothing but the Display of his *Majestick Presence* which did there make its ordinary Abode. But whether that be true or false, it's most plain and apparent that wheresoever he ap-

peared as the King of *Israel*, or Representative of *God* to them, he always clothed himself in a *visible* Glory and Splendor. Thus he appeared to them in a Pillar of Fire, that is, in a most *bright* and *luminous* Form, when he conducted them thro' the *Red-Sea*, and the Wilderness; and when he came down upon Mount *Sinai* to give the Law to them, it's said that the Glory in which they beheld him was *like devouring fire*, *Exod.* 24. 17. that is, it was unspeakably *bright* and *resulgent*, even like that of a most *intense* and *vehement* Fire; and in all this *radiant* Glory did he display himself from between the Cherubims when he removed from the Mountain, and chose the Tabernacle for the Seat of his *future* Residence and *Royal* Abode. Thus wheresoever he appeared in his *Kingly* Majesty as the *publick* Representative of his Father, this *visible* Glory is always made mention of, as that which was the *peculiar* Character of his Presence and Person. 'Tis true, 'tis recorded of *Moses* that when he came down from the Vision upon the Mount, his Face shone so brightly that the *Israelites* were not able to approach him; which seems to argue that this *visible* Glory was not so *peculiar* to the *Eternal Word* as his Father's Representative, as we would have it, since we plainly see it was *common* to *Moses* with him. But this doth no ways destroy our Assertion; because it's plain that *that* Glory which covered the Face of *Moses*, was all derived from the Glory of the *Eternal Word*, with whom for *forty* Days he had conversed in the Mount. For *Moses* being sent down as an Apostle to the *Jews* to promulgate those Laws to them which he had received upon the Mount, the *Eter-*  
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nal Word, to convince the *unbelieving Jews* that he had sent him, reflects upon his Face some Rays of Glory from that Sphere of Light in which he appeared to and conversed with him, that *that* might be an *ocular* Demonstration to them that *Moses* came from him, and was commissioned by him to preach and promulgate his Laws to them. So that *Moses* his Glory being derived from the Word, declared him to be his Apostle and Minister; even as the Glory of the Word being derived from the Father, declared him to be his Representative and Vice-Roy; so that from its shining upon the Face of *Moses*, it by no means follows that this *visible* Glory is not the *peculiar* Character of God's *immediate* Representative; because that which shone upon his Face was only the *Parhelium* or Reflection of the *visible* Glory of him who was God's *immediate* Representative. For so the Earth also is said to shine with the Glory of the God of Israel, *Ezek.* 43. 2. and as the Glory with which it shone was not the Glory of the Earth, but the Glory of the God of Israel; so neither was that Glory upon the Face of *Moses* the Glory of *Moses*, but the Glory of that *divine* Person, with whom he had conversed, derived to, and reflected upon him; and it being still the *proper* Glory of that *divine* Person, may very well be said to be the *peculiar* Character of his being the *immediate* Representative of God, notwithstanding it reflected from him upon *Moses*; especially considering that this *reflected* Glory upon *Moses* his Face was to be an Evidence to the *Jews* that he came down to them as an Apostle from the *Eternal Word* with Authority to publish, and declare his Laws to them. For if this *derivative* Spen-



dor was an Evidence that *Moses* came down as an Apostle from that *divine* Person on the Mount, then the *original* Splendor of that *divine* Person whence it was derived and reflected, was at least an *equal* Evidence that he came down upon the Mount as the Apostle, and *immediate* Representative of the most *High God* himself.

And in the same manner we find that the *Word Incarnate* did give Evidence to the Commission of his *Christian Apostles*; for upon the *Day of Pentecost*, when they were assembled together, it is said that *there appeared unto them cloven Tongues like as of fire, and sat upon every one of them, Acts 2. 3.* that is, there were several Flashes or Beams of Glory which like *bright* Flames of Fire, did cleave asunder in many Places according to the *natural* Motion of Flames, of which every Part as it extends it self in Length grows more *Spire-like* or *Pyramidal*, and so divides from the part next to it; and upon the Head of every one of the Apostles, did one of these *divided* Flames of Glory rest in the Form of a Tongue, which like a Flame grows *sharper* and *sharper* towards the Top: For thus the *Hebrew Idiom* for a Flame of Fire uses the *Tongue* of Fire, because of the Resemblance that is between them, *Isa. 5. 24.* So that as the *Eternal Word* did evidence to the *Jews* the Apostleship of *Moses* by that *visible* Glory which he reflected on his Face, so did the *Word Incarnate* evidence to the *Christian Church* the Apostleship of the *Twelve* by this *visible* Glory which he derived upon them. For now, according to *John the Baptist's* Prediction of him, he baptized them *with the Holy Ghost, and with Fire, Luke 3. 16.* that is, by the *outward* Sign of that *visible* Glory

Glory which rested like Fire upon them, he solemnly initiated them into their *Apostleship*, and declared them to be the *Heralds* of his Will to the World. And as this *visible* Glory with which he baptized them, was an Evidence of their being sent from, and commissioned by him to bear his Authority, and represent his Person; so that *visible* Glory with which he was baptized from *Heaven*, first in the River *Jordan*, and afterwards upon Mount *Tabor*, was an *undoubted* Evidence that he was sent from *above* to be his Father's Representative in the *Church*: For if their shining with his Glory was an Evidence of their being invested with his Authority, then his shining with his Father's Glory must be an *equal* Evidence of his being invested with the Authority of his Father. And as this *visible* Glory was always the *peculiar* Character of God's *immediate* Representative, and the *Royal* Crown and Robes as it were with which the most *High* adorned him at his *Inauguration*, and Investment with his *own* *Kingly* Authority; so St. *Peter* expressly tells *Cornelius* and his Company, that God had anointed him with the *Holy Ghost*, and with Power, *Acts* 10. 13. that is, by that outward Sign of the *visible* Glory in which the *Holy Ghost* descended upon him, he had invested him with *Regal* Power, and deputed and declared him to be King of the *Church*. And this in all probability was the Reason why he forbade his Disciples to declare his Transfiguration till after his *Resurrection* from the Dead, *Mark* 9. 9. because he knew that if they did, the *Jews* would not believe it, but would maliciously interpret it to be a *false* Pretence of his to the Title of God's *immediate* Representative

tive and Vice-Roy, that *visible* Glory in which he appeared being the *proper* Character of that *divine* King by whom the most *High God* had formerly governed them; and therefore in all the History of his Life you find he did industriously avoid openly to avow his *Regal* Authority, and only insinuates it by Consequences and *obscure* Intimations. For so violently were they prejudiced against his being their *King* upon the account of his *obscure* Parentage, and *mean* Condition, that he could not but foresee how *unseasonable* it would yet be publickly to own his *Regal* Authority, and consequently the Glory of his Transfiguration which did so apparently infer it; till by more *miraculous* Effects, and particularly by his *Resurrection from the Dead*, he had sufficiently proved and demonstrated it; and then he openly declares without any Reserve, that *all power was given him in Heaven and Earth*, *Matth. 28.18*. Since therefore it is so apparent by this *Characteristical* Glory, in which his Person was inrobed, and which the *Apostle* assures us they saw him invested with, we have all the Reason in the World to conclude that the most *High God* hath deputed him to be King and Lord of the *Church*. For when the *Apostle* tells us that they saw this *visible* Glory which shone upon him at his *Baptism* and *Transfiguration*, he doth as good as say that they saw all the Solemnity of his *divine* Coronation, that they beheld the most *High God* circling his Brows with the *Royal* Diadem, and investing his *sacred* Body with the *Imperial* Robes of the *great King* of the World. So that if it be true what *St. John* says, that they did see this Glory, (as we have all the Reason in  
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the World to conclude it is, because he offered to seal his Testimony of it with his Blood, and the other *two* that saw it with him actually did so) then we cannot but acknowledge the *blessed Jesus* to be *our King*, to whose *divine* Authority we are bound to pay the *lowest* Homage and Obedience; and that whensoever we wilfully transgress his Laws, we do openly rebel against our most *rightful* Sovereign, to whose Service we are bound by all *possible* Ties and Obligations.

2. They saw the Glory of that *miraculous* Power which he exerted in the Course of his Ministry; from whence I infer the Credibility of the *Christian Religion*: For the many *stupendous* Miracles that he wrought, were a most *plain* and *unquestionable* Evidence of a *Divine* Power residing in him, and accompanying his Ministry. For never were there so many *miraculous* Effects produced, either *before* or *since*, in the World, by the most *renowned* Workers of Miracles that ever were; and all that hath been done by the most *famous* Magicians, that are recorded in History, were but like the *little* Tricks and Delusions of *Jugglers*, compared with the *wondrous* Works of our *Saviour*; and yet 'tis apparent that his Education had been most *plain* and *simple*, that he never had been instructed in any *Mathematical* Science, or *mystical* Rites, or in any *other* Art of performing Wonders, either by *Humane* Wit or *Diabolical* Assistance; but was bred up under the Care of his *poor honest* Parents, who were forced to earn their Bread with the Sweat of their Brows, and so in all Probability was trained up in his Father's Profession, that so by his *daily* Labour he might be able to contribute  
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to the Charge of his Maintenance. And yet 'tis plain, this *home-bred* Person sometimes, only by speaking of a Word, sometimes meerly by the Touch of his Hand, sometimes by a *silent* Virtue proceeding from him without any *outward* Sign intervening, did *more* and far *greater* Wonders in *three* or *four* Years Time, then all the most *skilful* Physicians, Magicians and Mathematicians could ever do either *before* or *after* him. Now how was it possible that ever such a Person should ever have accomplished such *great* and *mighty* Things as he did, had he not been indued with Power from above? And if he was indued with such a Power, what *greater* Evidence can we desire of the Truth and Divinity of his Doctrine? For it is not *supposable* that the God of Truth would have endued our Saviour with this *miraculous* Power, had that Doctrine been *false* which he sought to confirm by it; because in so doing he would have openly *patronized* a Cheat, and designedly contributed to the Propagation of an Imposture, which is utterly *inconsistent* with his Truth and Veracity: So that now the Truth of Christianity finally resolves into the Veracity of God, which is the Foundation of all the Certainty in the World. For admitting that God can either *deceive* or be *deceived*, we do not know but our Faculties may be constantly imposed upon, and then there is nothing in Nature that we can be certain of: So that if it be true, as St. John here testifies, that they did see the Glory of our Saviour's Miracles, that is a most *undeniable* Evidence of the Truth and Divinity of his Doctrine; and that they did see it, I think is as evident: For it is not imaginable that any *single* Man would openly

penly testify a *known* Lye without some Temptation inducing him thereunto; much less that so many *Hundreds* of Persons as the *Eye-Witnesses* of our Saviour's Miracles were, should conspire to cheat the World, not only when they had *no* Temptation to it, but when they had *all* the Reason in the World against it; for they saw their Master suffer a *shameful* Death before their Eyes, by which they might easily divine what their *own* Fate would be if they persevered to preach up his Miracles and Doctrine, which they could not resolve to do without bidding Adieu to all their *temporal* Hopes, and engaging themselves to undergo all the Miseries and Calamities in the World; and if they testified what they knew to be *false*, they transgressed the Rule of their *own* Religion, and thereby forfeited all their Hopes of a *blessed* Immortality in the Life to come. And can it be imagined that so many Men should at the *same* Time so unanimously agree to report and testify the Miracles of a Man whom they had lately seen crucified before their Eyes, when they knew in their *own* Consciences, that it was all a *meer* Forgery, and could not but foresee, that by persisting in it, they should incur an *inevitable* Ruin in this Life, and an *eternal* Damnation in the Life to come? Was there ever such a *desperate* Piece of Madness heard of from the Beginning of the World to this Day? And yet this *monstrous* Thing, which is by a *thousand* Times more *incredible* than any thing in the *Christian Religion*, we must not only imagin *may be*, but believe that it really *was*; or else confess that St. *John* says true here, that they did see the Glory of his Miracles, which is  
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so *undoubted* an Evidence of the Truth of his Doctrine. Wherefore since we are compassed about with such a Cloud of Witnesses, let us by a *lively* and *vigorous* Faith adhere to the Truth of our *holy Religion*, and then we shall find it *quick* and *mighty* through God, to the casting down the strong Holds of our *vicious* Habits, and implanting in us all those *divine* Dispositions which are necessary to qualify us for those *endless* Joys which our *blessed Lord* hath promised to, and prepared for us.

3. They saw the Glory of that *divine* and *incomparable* Doctrine which he taught : From whence I infer the Unreasonableness of Mens entertaining *mean* and *contemptible* Opinions of the *Christian Faith*, since it is so *excellent* in it self that it was a Glory to the Son of God to be the Author of it. We have a sort of Men among us who would fain be accounted the *Wits* and *Virtuoso's* of the Age, who pretend to acknowledge a *God*, and a *Providence*, and all the Principles of *Natural Religion*, and yet openly profess a very *mean* and *contemptible* Opinion of *Christianity*, and take all Occasions to represent it as a *ridiculous* Fiction, fit only to be imposed upon the *credulous* Vulgar. But I would fain know of these *mighty Men of Reason*, what *plausible* Pretence they can urge for this their *bold* and *blasphemous* Censure ? Is it because *Christianity* is a *Revealed Religion* ? or, because there is any thing in it that is *unworthy* of God whom we pretend to be the Revealer of it ? or because there wants *credible* Evidence of its being revealed by him ? If they pretend to reject it because 'tis a *Revealed Religion*, I would beseech them to consider how it could have comported with the Goodness of God  
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never to make any Revelation of his Will to the World, when the Generality of Men were lost in such a *Mid-night* of Ignorance in respect of *Natural Religion* ; how even the *natural* Notions of the *Deity* were corrupted into all manner of Follies and Vanities, and Men had formed Religions not only *hateful* to God, but *nauseous* to all that were *wise* among themselves ; and how defective also they were in the *best* and *purest* Precepts of *Morality*, having at last consecrated their Vices, and inthroned them among the Graces of *Religion* : In which *miserable* State of Things, it is so far from being *unreasonable* to expect a Revelation, that 'tis hardly *possible* to vindicate God's Goodness without supposing it. For should he have *for ever* left Mankind in this *bewilder'd* State without Revelation, he would have been more wanting to Man, who is the *noblest* of all his *earthly* Creatures, than he is to the most *contemptible* Animal ; for to his *meanest* Creatures he hath given *sufficient* Ability to attain the *highest* End of their Beings, which Mankind can hardly be supposed to have in his *corrupt degenerate* State, without supposing a *new* Revelation from *Heaven*. For we have an *innate* Notion within us of a *Supreme Being* above us, that is superlatively *good*, and endued with all *possible* Perfection ; our *natural* Reason dictates to us, that to converse with and enjoy him *for ever*, is the *highest* Good that we are capable of, and the most *suitable* to our *rational* Natures ; but by what means we may be reconciled to him in this State of Revolt whereinto we are fallen, and how at length we may arrive to the Enjoyment of him, could never have been sufficiently made known to us in this *Maze* of Ignorance



Ignorance wherein we were involved, without some *divine* Revelation : And therefore to suppose Revelation *unreasonable* in our *miserable* State and Circumstances, is to suppose it *unreasonable* for the *great* and *good* Governor of the World to furnish his *noblest* Creature *Man* with *sufficient* means to obtain his most *excellent* End. And if it be acknowledged that there is a Revelation, because it is so highly *reasonable* that there should be, let us consider which of all the Religions in the World, that pretends to be from *God*, is most likely to be the Revelation of his Will, and then I doubt not, if we impartially compare them, but our reason will soon give its Vote for *Christianity*. If you enquire for this Revelation of the *Enthusiastick* Poets of the *Heathen*, how *wild* and *extravagant* is that *Religion* which we find in the *Theology* of *Hesiod*, the *Hymns* of *Orpheus*, the *Odes* of *Pindar*, and the *Poems* of *Homer*, *Virgil*, and *Ovid*? If you consult the *Heathen Oracles* of *Delphos*, *Dodona*, and *Jupiter Hammon*, how *vain* and *frivolous*, how *uncertain* and *fallacious*, are all their Responses? besides that, the Books and Records of them are long since perished and consumed. If you enquire for this Revelation in the *Old Roman Theology*, which *Numa* pretended to receive from his Goddess *Egeria*, that also is lost, being burnt by the *Roman Senate*, as *Valerius Maximus* tells us; for that it contained many Things in it not only destructive to the Gods and Religions of other Countries, but also to his own and the *Roman* Profession. Or shall we confront *Christianity* with the *Alchoran* of *Mahomet*, which he often pretends to have received from God? There we shall find every Page almost

almost abounding with monstrous Cheats and Impostures, the whole being nothing else but a confused Medley of impious and contemptible Fopperies, heaped together by a Triumvirate of Arians, Jews, and Pagans, who were all of them known Impostors in the Ages wherein they lived : So that to confront Christianity with any of these, is to light up a Rush Candle, and resolve to outface the Sun with it. For as for Christianity, 'tis a Religion made up of the most divine and Godlike Institutions; its Precepts being such as are most worthy of God, enjoining nothing but what is either true Godliness, and most generous Morality, or what are the most efficacious Means and Instruments of promoting them. And as for its Doctrine, it partly consists of those Principles of Natural Religion which all wise Men, of whatsoever Nation or Religion, have owned and acknowledged, such as the Existence, Unity, and Providence of the Godhead, the Immortality of the Soul, and the Rewards and Punishments of another Life, together with the great Day of Accounts, wherein Men shall receive according to what they have done in the Flesh : And even the Doctrine of the Holy Trinity, which is the profoundest Mystery of all our Religion, hath been owned and professed by the greatest and most famous Philosophers that ever were. And as for those Doctrines that are purely Christian, such as the Birth and Life, and Death, the Resurrection and Ascension of our Saviour, together with his Sitting on the Right-hand of God, and coming at the last Day to judge the World, they are all of them so excellently contrived to serve the great Ends of Religion, so wonderfully pregnant with Motives and Arguments to engage

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Men

Men to the *greatest* Purity and Goodness, that by their *own native* Beauty and *excellent* Contrivance, they manifest themselves to be the Products of a *divine* Wisdom. So that there can be no *reasonable* Pretence to contemn *Christianity* either because it is a *Revealed Religion*, or because it contains any thing in it that is any ways *unworthy* of the Revealer: And that there wants not *sufficient* Evidence to demonstrate it to be the Revelation of God, I have already proved in the former Inference. So that after all the *lewd* Talk of these *confident* Men, it's apparent there is not the *least* Colour of Reason for their *impious* Censures of *Christianity*. But alas ! it's evident that the Foundation of their Quarrel against it, lies not so much in their Reason, as their Lusts. *Christianity* lays them under *severe* Restraints, and will not permit them to be *wicked* in quiet, which provokes them to arm their Wit, and the *little* Reason that they have against it ; that so having baffled, or rather laughed themselves out of their *Religion*, they may be left at liberty to play the Fools and Mad-men without Controul or Disturbance. And I make no doubt but if instead of that *strict* Piety and Virtue which *Christianity* enjoins, it had but indulged to them the Liberties of the *Heathen* Religion, so that they could have but acted all their Wickedness with Devotion, sacrificed to the Gods in *drunken* Bowls, and worshiped in the Arms of a *Strumpet*; there are no Men in the World would have been more *zealous Christians* than they. But let no Man be so *foolish* as to imagine that he can alter the Nature of Things by laughing at them, or that *Christianity* will cease to be *true* in Compliance with our *wicked* Interest

Interest and Desires; no, no, Things will be as they are in despite of us, and howsoever we will please to fancy them. And if after all our *rude* Contempts of *Religion*, it be found to be *true*, as I doubt not but it will, we shall be *sensible* when it is *too* late that it had been more for our Safety to have play'd before the Mouth of a *Cannon* while it is spitting Fire, or to have catch'd hold of a *Thunderbolt* as it comes roaring down from the Clouds, than to have plaid with *Religion*, and made it the Subject of our *impious* Scorns and Buffooneries.

4. And lastly ; They saw the Glory of his *immaculate* Holiness and Purity : From whence I infer, that Holiness and *true* Goodness is the *greatest* Glory and Honour to *humane* Nature. For this was the Glory of the *Son of God* himself when he assumed our Nature, and dwelt among us; and there is nothing more *glorious* in *Christ* than his Goodness; and notwithstanding those *excellent* Doctrines that he preached, those *stupendous* Miracles that he wrought, and that *visible* Splendor in which he was inrobed, he had not deserved the Name of a *great* and *glorious* Man if he had not been *just* and *charitable*, *temperate*, and *humble*, and *Heavenly-minded* and *eminent* in all those *divine* and *humane* Virtues which are the *proper* Glory and Ornament of *humane* Nature. For that which makes a Man more *honourable* than a *meer* Animal, and advances us into the *next* Degree of Beings to Angels, is our Reason, by which alone we border upon the Divinity, and do claim Kindred with the *Angelical* Natures. That therefore which is truly our Honour and Glory, consists in living according to that Reason by which we are advanced



above all *sublunary* Natures ; that is, in governing our *Passions* and *Appetites*, *Words* and *Actions*, according to those *Eternal* Rules of Righteousness which *Right Reason* dictates to us ; and if instead of doing thus, we wholly resign up our selves to the Dominion of our *brutish* and *unreasonable* Inclinations, we thereby render our selves more *despicable* and *infamous* than the most *beastly* Brutes in all the Creation, and even those *Goats*, and *Wolves*, and *Swine*, and *Tygers*, whom we resemble in our *beastly* Manners, could they see our Shame, would doubtlessly hiss at us, and reproach us for *Greater Beasts* than themselves ; for they all live up to the *best* of their Natures, and regularly pursue the *highest* End for which they were created ; whereas we who are Allied to the *noblest* of Beings, and are created and designed for the most *glorious* Ends, do by our *base* and *unreasonable* Condescensions shamefully under-value our selves in pursuing no Ends but what are extremely *unworthy* of us : So that it had been much more for our Honour and Reputation to have assumed the Shape and Nature of Brutes, when we assumed their Manners and Customs ; for then our Actions would have very well become us, and neither *God* nor *Men* could have justly upbraided us for them. But to lead the Lives of *Brutes* in the Shape and Nature of *Men*, is *monstrous* ; 'tis to advance the *Beast* above the *Man*, to place our *Heels* where Nature hath placed our *Head*, and become our own *Reverse* and *Antipodes*.

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OF THE  
AUTHORITY  
OF THE  
Holy Scripture.

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JOHN V. 39.

*Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life.*

**B**Y the Scriptures here must be meant the *Old Testament*; for as yet the greatest Part of the *New* was *unrevealed*, and the whole of it *unwritten*. They were those very Scriptures which the *unbelieving Jews*, to whom our Saviour was now preaching, owned and acknowledged to be the Word of God; *for in them*, says our Saviour, *ye think ye have eternal life*; which it's certain they did not think of any other Scriptures but only those of the *Old Testament*; and they are they, says he, *which testify of me*. And to be sure there were no other Scriptures which could testify of Christ to the *unbelieving Jews*, but only those of Moses and the Prophets, these being the only Scrip-

tures whose Testimony they credited. But yet the Reason which our *Saviour* urges to move them to read the *Old Testament*, doth as much oblige us to read the *New* as well as the *Old*, as it did them to read the *Old*; *for in them ye think ye have eternal life*; that is, in them ye think ye have *eternal Life* promised, and all the *Necessaries* to be believed, and done by you in order to your obtaining it, proposed to you. And indeed as they thought, so it was; they had *eternal Life* proposed to them in *Hieroglyphicks*; for that was the *Mystery* of their *Holy of Holies*, that was the *Interpretation* of their Land of *Canaan*, and the *spiritual* Sense of all their *general* Promises of good Things to come: They had all the *Articles* of Faith, and all the *Instances* of Duty that were *necessary* to their Attainment of *eternal Life* exhibited to them in the Writings of their Prophets, and the Types and Figures of their Law. For it was by this Rule alone that all the *Holy Men* of the *Jewish Nation* did live and believe; and either this was *sufficient* to guide and direct them to *eternal Life*, or they were left under a *fatal* Necessity of falling short of it: It was the *Law of the Lord* that did enlighten their Eyes, and rejoyce their Hearts, and convert their Souls; and it was in keeping it that they found great Reward, *Psf. 19. 7, 8, 11*. And therefore either they fell short of the Reward of *eternal Life* notwithstanding this their Illumination and Conversion, or they found it in keeping that Law by which they were illuminated and converted; and if in keeping their Law they found *eternal Life*, then it's certain that in their Law they had it. So that these Words of our *Saviour* (*for in them ye think ye have eternal life*) do

do not imply that they were mistaken in thinking so, or at least they only imply that they were mistaken in thinking to obtain *eternal Life* by adhering to the *prime* and *literal* Sense of their Law without pursuing the *Mystery* and *Spiritual* Meaning of it; which was indeed the Error of the *Pharisees*, with whom our *Saviour* is here discoursing. For the *internal* Sense and *Mystery* of their Law was the *Gospel*, all whose *Articles of Faith*, and *Precepts of Duty*, were (though darkly and obscurely) expressed and represented in the *Types* and *Figures* of the *Mosaick* Institution. And hence the *Apostle* tells, that both the *Priests* and their *Oblations*, did serve unto the example, and shadow of heavenly things, *Heb. 8. 5.* So that the heavenly Things contained in the *Gospel* were the *substantial* Ideas which those *Legal* Types and Patterns contained and represented; and the same Author calls that Law a shadow of good things to come, *Heb. 10. 1.* that is, it was an *obscure* Scheme or *Prefiguration* of the *Mercies* of the *Gospel*, of which *eternal Life* is a *principal* Part. Since therefore the Law was nothing else but only the *Gospel* in dark and obscure Cyphers, if in this we *Christians* have *eternal Life*, in that the *Jews* had it also: And therefore the Reason which our *Saviour* here urges to oblige the *Jews* to search the *Scriptures* of the *Old Testament*; [for in them ye think ye have eternal life] doth at least equally oblige us *Christians* to search the *Scriptures* both of the *Old* and *New*. For if they had just Reason to think they had *eternal Life* in the *Old Testament*, and were thereupon obliged to search into it, we have rather more Reason to think that we have *eternal Life* in the *New*, since the *New*



*Testament* is nothing else but only the *Old* decyphered and unriddled ; and therefore we must not only have *eternal Life* in *this*, as they had in *that*, but we must also have it far more expressly than they. In the Prosecution of this Argument therefore, I shall endeavour these *Two Things*.

I. To shew you that in the *Holy Scriptures* we have *eternal Life*.

II. That this is a very forcible Reason to oblige us to search them.

I. First, that in the *Holy Scriptures* we have *eternal Life* ; that is, that in them we have *eternal Life* proposed to us, together with all that is necessary to be believed, and practised by us in order to our obtaining it ; or in other words, that the *Holy Scripture* is a sufficient Rule both of Faith and Manners to guide and direct us to *eternal Happiness*. And this is one Article of the Faith of the Church of England, which we are required to explain to the People ; for so in her sixth Article our Church professes, that the *Holy Scripture* containeth all things necessary to Salvation ; so that whatsoever is not read therein, or may be proved thence, is not required of any Man that it should be believed as an Article of Faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to Salvation. Now to make the Scripture a sufficient Rule as to all Things necessary to Salvation, there are two Things necessary ; First, That it should be full ; and Secondly, That it should be clear : both which the *Holy Scripture* is in an eminent Degree, as containing in it all that is necessary to be believed, and done in order to *eternal Life*. And this

this will evidently appear from these three following Propositions :

1. That the *Holy Spirit* inspired the Writers of the *Scripture* with all that is *necessary* to *eternal Life*.

2. That they preached to the World all those *Necessaries* with which the *Holy Spirit* inspired them.

3. That all those *necessary* Truths which they preached, are comprehended in those *Sacred* Writings of theirs of which the *Holy Scripture* consists.

1. That the *Holy Spirit* inspired the Writers of the *Scripture* with all that is *necessary* to *eternal Life*. For first, our *Saviour*, by whom they were originally instructed, declares, that as the *Father* loved him, and shewed him all things that himself did, *Joh.* 5. 20. so he had made known to them all things that he had heard of his *Father*, *Joh.* 17. 8. And then when he went from them, and ceased to instruct them in his own Person, he promised that by his *Spirit* he would teach them all things, and bring all things to their remembrance whatsoever he had said unto them, *Joh.* 14. 26. and that by the same *Spirit* he would guide them into all Truth, *Joh.* 16. 13. If therefore the *Spirit* did perform this Promise to them, ( as there is no doubt but he did ) then we are sure that he did teach them over again whatsoever *Christ* had taught them before, and if *Christ* had taught them whatsoever he had heard of his *Father*, ( as he declares he had ) then it is certain either that he taught them all Things *necessary* to *eternal Life*, or that he himself had not heard from his

his Father all Things that are necessary thereunto.

2. That as they were taught by the Spirit, all Things *necessary to eternal Life*, so what they were taught, they preached and delivered to the World. For so our *Saviour* commanded them to go forth into all the World, and *teach all Nations to observe all those things which he had commanded them*, *Matth.* 28. 19, 20. Which Injunction of his they strictly observed ; for so we are told, that in Obedience to it, *they went forth, and preached every where*, *Mark*, 16. 20. And that their preaching extended to all Things *necessary to Salvation*, is evident from their *own Testimony* : For thus *St. Paul* tells the *Ephesians* that he had *not shunned to declare unto them the whole Counsel of God*, *Acts* 20. 27. And to be sure in the *whole Counsel of God*, all that is *necessary to Salvation* must be included. And concerning that *Gospel* which he had preached to the *Corinthians*, he thus pronounces, *By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in Memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain*, *1 Cor.* 15. 1, 2. But how could they be saved by that *Gospel* he preached to them, unless it contained in it all Things *necessary to Salvation* ? And this very *Gospel* which the Apostles in their *constant Ministry* proposed to the World, *St. James* calls the *ingrafted Word*, which is able to save our Souls, *Jam.* 1. 21. And for the same Reason it is also called the *Word of Reconciliation*, *2 Cor.* 5. 19. The *Word of Salvation*, *Acts* 13. 26. And the *Word of Life*, *Acts* 5. 20. And the *Savour of Life unto Life*, *2 Cor.* 2. 16. And also the *Power of God unto Salvation to every one that believes*, *Rom.* 1. 17. Neither of which it could be justly stiled, supposing it to be *defective* in any Thing

Thing necessary to the eternal Happiness of Men.

3. And lastly, That all those necessary Truths which they preached, are comprehended in those Writings of theirs, of which the *Holy Scripture* consists. It is true, before the *Christian Doctrine* was collected into those *Scriptures* of which the *New Testament* now consists, it was all conveyed by *Oral Tradition* from the Mouths of the Teachers, to the Ears of the Disciples; but in a little Time those holy Men who first preached it, found an absolute Necessity of committing it to Writing, as a much surer Way of preserving it uncorrupted, and transmitting it down to all succeeding Generations; for thus *Eusebius* tells us,

1 That the Romans not being satisfied with St. Peter's preaching

*Hist. Eccles. l. 2. c. 15.*

of Christianity to them, earnestly desired St. Mark, his Companion, that he would leave them in Writing, a standing Monument of that Doctrine which St. Peter had delivered to them by Word of Mouth, which was the Occasion, says he, of the Writing of St. Mark's Gospel: Which thing St. Peter understanding by a Revelation of the Spirit, being highly pleased with their earnest Desire, he confirmed it by his own Authority, that it might afterwards be read in the Churches. It seems in those Days the Romans did not think oral or unwritten Traditions a sufficient Conservatory of divine Truths, nor did their Bishops then forbid the reading of the *Scriptures* to the Laity in their own Language.

After which he tells us, that St. Mathew and St. John were the only Disciples of our Lord, who

*L. 3 c. 24.*

had left written Commentaries of the Things which they had



had preached behind them; and it was, says he, Necessity that impelled them to write. For Matthew having preached the Faith to the Hebrews, and intending to go from them to other Nations, wrote his Gospel in his own Country-Language, that thereby he might supply the Want of his Presence to those whom he left behind him. And afterwards when Mark and Luke had published their Gospels, John who had hitherto only preached the Gospel by Word of Mouth, being at length moved by the same Reason betook himself to write. And the Three former Gospels, says he, arriving to the Knowledge of all Men, and particularly of St. John, he approved them, and with his own Testimony confirmed the Truth of them. From which Relation it's evident, that that which moved those holy Men to commit their Gospels to Writing, was this, that they judged it necessary for the Conservation of the Christian Doctrine, that so these in their Absence might be standing Monuments of the Faith, to preach that Gospel to Mens Eyes which they had preached to their Ears: And if they wrote to preserve the Faith, to be sure they would leave no necessary or essential Part of it unwritten. There are several Propositions in these Gospels which, though very useful, are far from being essential Parts of Christianity; and can we imagine that those holy Men who wrote on purpose to conserve Christianity, should take so much Care to write many Things which are not necessary Parts, and in the mean time omit any Things that are? Eusebius tells us of St Mark in particular, ἐν δὲ τῷ ἐπιτελεῖν τοῦ βιβλίου τὸ μνηστὴρ ὁ ἄνθρωπος περιελαττεῖν ἢ ψεύσασθαι τί ἐν αὐτοῖς; i. e. he took great Care of this more especially, not to pretermitt any of those Things which he had heard, (even from St. Peter)

Peter) nor to affix any thing to them that was false : And if he were so careful not to omit any Thing, to be sure he would be particularly careful not to omit any Thing which he judged necessary to the eternal Happiness of Men. But what need we depend upon humane Authority, when as, if we consult those Sacred Writings themselves, ( which so far as they go, all Christians allow to be the Word of God ) we shall find they give this Testimony of themselves, that they comprehend in them all Things necessary to eternal Life. For thus the Writers of the New Testament testify of the Old, That they are able to make us wise unto Salvation through Faith which is in Jesus Christ, 2 Tim. 3. 15. And if the Old Testament alone was able to do this, then much more the Old and New together ; but how could they make Men wise to Salvation, if they were defective in any Article that is necessary to Salvation ? and then the same Author goes on and tells us, that all Scripture is given by Inspiration of God, and is profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, for Instruction in Righteousness ; that the Man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works, v. 16, 17. And if the Old Scriptures were sufficient to make the Man of God perfect, and to furnish him thoroughly unto all good Works, one would think that the New and Old together should not be defective. For that the Scriptures of the New Testament as well as of the Old contain in them all Things necessary to eternal Life, they themselves do plainly testify of themselves : For thus St. Luke in the Beginning of his Gospel tells his Theophilus, to whom he writes, that forasmuch as many had set forth a Declaration of  
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those things that were surely believed among Christians, it seemed good unto him also having had a perfect understanding of all things from the first, to write them down in order that he might know the Certainty of those things wherein he had been instructed: From whence I infer, that supposing St. Luke performed what he promised, his Gospel must contain a full Declaration of the Christian Religion: For, First, by promising to give an Account of those Things which were surely believed among Christians, he engaged himself to give an entire Account of Christianity, unless we will suppose that there were some Parts of Christianity which the Christians of that Time did not surely believe. Secondly, In promising to give an Account of those Things of which he had a perfect Understanding from the first, and in which his Theophilus had been instructed, he also engages himself to give a compleat Account of the whole Religion, unless we will suppose that there were some Parts of this Religion which St. Luke did not perfectly understand, and in which Theophilus had not been before instructed. Thus also St. John testifies of his Gospel, Chap. 20. 31. *These things are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through his name.* And if it be objected that by these Things the Apostle only means the Miracles of Christ which are the Motives of our Belief, and not his Doctrines which are to be believed by us; this is notoriously false, since by these Things St. John means his Gospel in which not only the Miracles, but the Doctrines of Christ are contained; and therefore in his first Epistle, chap. 4. 13. he saith, *These things have I written unto you that believe*

on the name of the Son of God that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe, or continue to believe on the name of the Son of God; Where by *These Things* it's plain he means only that *Christian Doctrine* which he had been teaching throughout the whole Epistle. From which *two Places* I argue, that *all Things necessary to eternal Life* are written, because he expressly tells us that *These Things* were written to this end, that they might beget and nourish in us that Faith by which we may obtain *eternal Life*; but if that Faith which these written Things was designed to beget in us, be not *sufficient to eternal Life*, then were these Things written in vain, and the End of writing them, which was that we might obtain *eternal Life*, by believing them, was wholly frustrated; but if that Faith were *sufficient to eternal Life*, then these written Things which begot that Faith, and were the Object of it, must contain in them all Things *necessary to eternal Life*; for how can they beget in us a Faith that is *sufficient to eternal Life*, unless they propose to our Faith all Things that are *necessary* thereunto?

And thus I have endeavoured to demonstrate from *Scripture* it self, which all agree is the *Word of God*, and consequently the most *concluding Authority* in the World, that the *Holy Scriptnre* is in it self a *sufficient Rule* of Faith and Manners to direct Men to *eternal Life*. And if this be so, I would fain know by what Warrant or Authority any Man or Church, can pretend to obtrude upon the Faith of *Christians* any *unwritten Traditions*, or *Doctrines* of Faith, and Rules of Worship, not recorded in *Scripture* as of *equal Authority* with those recorded in



in Scripture, and equally necessary to the eternal Happiness of Men. For that there have been such bold Imposers in the Christian World Irenæus assures us in the 2d Chapter of his 2d Book against *Heresies*; where he tells us of a sort of *Hereticks* who taught, that the Truth could not be found in the Scriptures by those to whom Tradition was unknown; for as much as it was not delivered by Writing, but by Word of Mouth. And these Hereticks<sup>1</sup>, as Ter-  
<sup>1</sup> De Præscrip. Hæret. c. 25.  
tullian observes, confessed indeed that the Apostles were ignorant, and that they did not at all differ among themselves in their Preaching, but said they revealed not all Things unto all Men; some Things they taught openly and to all, some Things secretly, and to a few; which secret Things were the unwritten Traditions which they sought to impose upon the Faith of Christians. And how far the Church of Rome it self doth in this matter tread in the Footsteps of these ancient Hereticks, is but too notorious: For thus in the Preface of their Catechism it is expressly affirmed by the Council of Trem, that the whole Doctrine to be delivered to the Faithful, is contained in the Word of God, which Word of God is distributed into Scripture and Tradition. And in the Council it self they declare, and define, that the Books of Scripture and unwritten Traditions are to be received and honoured with equal pious Affection and Reverence: In which Words they expressly own another Word of God besides the Scripture, viz. Tradition, which they equalize with the Scripture it self. And this is almost verbatim the very Assertion which both Irenæus and Tertullian condemn for Heresy; and as they are the same, so we find they are grounded

on the same Authority : For those very Texts of *Scripture* which those ancient Hereticks urged for their *Tradition*, are urged by *Bellarmin* for the *Tradition* of his *Church*. Thus for their *Tradition*, as *Irenaus* and *Tertullian* acquaints us, they urged that of *St. Paul*, *We speak Wisdom among them that are perfect* ; and also, *O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust* ; and again, *That good Thing which is committed to thee, keep* : All which Texts are urged by *Bellarmin* in his 4th and 5th Books *de Verbo Dei*, in behalf of that *Tradition* which the *Church of Rome* contends for : And 'tis something hard that that which was damned for *Heresy* in the *Primitive Church*, should be made an *Article of Faith* in the present *Roman*. Not that we do disallow of *Traditions* universally received in all *Churches* and *Ages* ; for we frankly acknowledge that what is now contained in *Scripture* was *Tradition* before it was *Scripture*, as being first delivered by Word of Mouth before it was collected into Writing ; and therefore whensoever it can be made evident to us that there are any *unwritten Doctrines* bearing the same Stamp of *Divine Authority* with those that are *written*, we are ready to receive them with the same Veneration as we do the *Scriptures* themselves. For it is not their being written that doth authorize them, but their being from *God*, and our *Saviour*, and his *Apostles* ; and therefore when once it's made appear to us that *Christ* or his *Apostles* taught so and so, that is sufficient to command our Assent and Submission whether it be made appear from *Scripture* or *Tradition*. So that the Reason why we embrace some *Doctrines* and reject others, is not merely because

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the *one* are written, and the *other* not ; but because to us, who live at so great a distance from *Christ* and his *Apostles*, it can never be made so evident, that what is not *written* was taught by them, as what is. What is *written* hath been delivered down to us by the *unanimous Tradition* and Testimony of the *Church of Christ* in all Ages, which I am sure can never be justly pretended of any *one* of those *unwritten Traditions* which the *Church of Rome* now imposes upon the Faith of *Christians*. Let them but produce the same *unanimous* Testimony that any one of those *Twelve Articles* which they have thought meet to superadd to the *ancient Creeds*, was taught by *Christ* or his *Apostles*, as we do that what is contained in *Scripture* was so, and we will as readily embrace it as any Proposition in *Scripture* ; but if *this Article* be neither to be found in *Scripture*, nor delivered down to us as taught by *Christ* or his *Apostles*, by the *unanimous* Testimony of the *Church of Christ* through all Ages, we must crave their pardon if we cannot receive it as Part of the *Word of God*. But how impossible it is to prove by the *unanimous* Testimony of the *Church*, that any *unwritten Doctrine* is Part of the *Word of God necessary* to be believed by all *Christians*, is evident from hence, because for *several Ages* after our *Saviour* the *Church* unanimously taught, that whatsoever was *necessary* to be believed was contained in *Scripture* ; and for the same *Church* at the same time to testify that *this* or *that unwritten Doctrine* is a Part of *God's Word necessary* to be believed, and yet that all *Doctrines necessary* to be believed are *written*, is plainly to contradict it self. And yet we find the *Primitive Fathers* unanimously

unanimously attesting that the *Scripture* is the Rule from whence we draw all the Assertions of our Faith, the *last Will* and Testimony of our *Saviour* by which all Controversies are to be decided, the Boundaries of the *Church*, out of which it is not to depart, the Touchstone of Truth, the Foundation and Pillar of our Faith for the Time to come, and the only certain Principle of *Christian Doctrine* and Demonstration in Matters of Faith. These are their *own Expressions*, and abundance more than these we meet with to the same purpose; and which is very observable, they not only assert the *Scripture* to be a full and adequate Rule of Faith, but severely declaim against all Additions to it. Thus *Eusebius Pamphilus* in the Name of the *Fathers* of the Council of Nice, τοῖς κτεγραμμένοις πισύε, τὰ μὴ κτεγραμμένα μὴ ἐννοίῃ μὴδὲ ζήλει; i. e. those Things which are written, believe; those Things which are not written, neither think upon, nor enquire after. Thus also *St. Austin*, Quicquid inde audieritis *Scriptura sacra*, hoc vobis bene sapiat; quicquid extra est, respuite, ne erretis in nebula: Whatsoever ye hear from the Holy Scriptures let it savour well with you; whatsoever is without them, refuse, lest ye wander in a Cloud. *St. Basil* declares, that it is a manifest falling from the Faith, and an Argument of Arrogancy either to reject any point of those Things that are written, or to bring in any of those which are not written; and that it is the Property of a faithful Man to be fully persuaded of the Truth of those Things that are delivered in the Holy Scripture, and not to dare either to reject or to add any thing thereunto. Thus *Tertullian* advers. Hermog. Si enim non est scriptum, timeat *Va illud adjicientibus aut detrahentibus destitutum?*



If what he pretends be not written, let him fear that Woe that is denounced against such as add or take away. What Likelihood therefore is there that they who thus severely forbid adding any thing to the written Word of God, did ever so much as dream of another Word of God consisting of unwritten Traditions? And indeed methinks it is very strange if there had been any other Word of God besides what is written, there should no notice be taken of it in that which is written; especially considering that if it be as necessary to be believed as the Roman Church defines it; it is as necessary that we should have Direction where to find it, and how to know it when we have it; but of this we have not the least Intimation in Scripture. For as for those Words of St. Paul, 2 Thess. 2. 15. *Hold the Traditions which ye have been taught, whether by Word, or our Epistle*, all that can be justly inferred from them is only this, that the Thessalonians at the Writing of this Epistle had only an Oral Tradition of a great Part of that Gospel which St. Paul had preached to them, the Gospels being as yet either not collected into Writing, or not dispersed abroad into the Churches; so that then *this*, and his former Epistle to them, were perhaps the only written Part of the New Testament that was yet arrived to their hands; and if so, then this Command of *holding the Traditions by word*, did oblige no longer than till they had received the written Gospel; because then those Traditions by Word were all recorded in Scripture, and being there recorded, they were thenceforth obliged to hold them as Scripture, and no longer as Traditions by Word. But supposing there are still unwritten Traditions in the Church that

that are not in *Scripture*, but yet were delivered by *Christ* or his *Apostles*, and so are equally the *Word of God* with the *Scripture*; I would fain know how we who live at so great a distance from *Christ* and his *Apostles*, should either know where to find, or be assured that they are such when we have them. We know very well that even in the *Primitive Ages* there were sundry counterfeit *Traditions* which *Hereticks* pretended to derive from *Christ* and his *Apostles*; and if it were so easy a matter to counterfeit *Traditions* then, how much more easy is it now? I confess *Vincentius Lirinensis* gives us a very good Rule how to distinguish counterfeit from true *Traditions*; *Quod ubiq; quod semper, quod ab omnibus creditum est, hoc est vere proprieq; Catholicum*: That which was every where, and always, and by all *Christians* believed, that is truly and properly *Catholick*. And by this Rule we are willing to abide; if they can shew us any Article of *Christianity* not recorded in *Scripture*, which hath been every where, and always believed by all *Christians*, we will readily admit it as an *unwritten Word of God*, and with the same Respect and Reverence as we do that which is *written*: But this we are fully assured they will never be able to perform, seeing, as was shewn before, the *Primitive Church* doth with one Consent attest the *Scripture* to be an entire Rule of Faith, in which all the Articles of *Christianity* are contained.

But we are told that for these *unwritten Traditions* we must rely upon the *present Church* of every Age, and receive as a *divine Tradition* whatsoever she defines to be so; where by the *present Church* is meant the *present Roman Church*; that is to say,

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whatsoever *this Church* defines we must believe it, because she defines it; which we cannot but think is a *hard Case*; *First*, Because we know very well that the *Roman Church* is at best but a Part of the *Church universal*, and we know no Right that any *Part* hath to impose upon the *Whole*, and to oblige it to believe whatsoever she proposes, meerly because she proposes it. *Secondly*, Because in Fact we are very well assured that the *Roman Church* is so far from being a *sincere Preserver of Tradition*, that there is no *Church* in the *World* hath more studiously attempted to counterfeit and deprave it; of which *innumerable* Instances are given by our Authors, many of which are now acknowledged even by their Authors to be *true*. For even their *Vulgar Latin Edition* of the *Bible* it self, which they prefer before the *Originals*, is confessed by themselves to abound with *manifest* Errors and Corruptions; and even to the very *Canon* of the *Bible* they have added *sundry Apocryphal Books* which we certainly know the *Primitive Tradition* never admitted as Parts of the *sacred Scripture*; and it is notorious to all the *World* how many Books and Writings they have forged, and how many of the Writings of the *Ancients* they have *gelded* and *interpolated* to defend and support those *pretended Traditions* which they have imposed upon the *World* as Articles of Faith. And after she hath been guilty of so many *apparent* Falsifications, we cannot but think it a very *hard Case* that we should still be obliged to believe her upon her own *bare* Word. For in the *third Place*, at this rate of Proceeding we must in many Instances condemn the *Traditions* of the *Primitive Church* in Com-  
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plement to those of the *present Roman*; which if we believe *our own Eyes*, and the most *authentick Histories and Records* of those Times, do expressly thwart and contradict *one another*; and since, if we would never so fain we can never believe both Parts of a Contradiction, we must in believing the *one* give the Lye to the *other*. Nay, *Fourthly* and lastly, though we should be perswaded, as we think we have Reason to be, that many of the *Traditions* of the *present Church of Rome* are not only not mentioned in *Scripture*, but directly contrary to it; (as for Instance, their performing *Divine Service* in an *unknown Tongue*, which we think is as contrary to *1 Cor. 14.* as *one Proposition* can be to *another*: (yet if that *Churches Definitions* do by their *own Authority* oblige our Faith, we must believe her against *Scripture* it self. And this we think *intollerable*, that any *Church* or *Christian* should be obliged to believe the *unwritten Word* of the *Church of Rome* in a Matter wherein, upon the most diligent and *impartial Search*, they are verily perswaded it contradicts the *written Word of God*; and if the Sentence of the *one* or *t'other* must be made *void*, we think it is very *reasonable* that the Voice of her *pretended unwritten Word* should be silenced by that more *certain one* of the *lively Oracles of God*. But after all, if what I have endeavoured to prove be proved, *viz.* that the *Holy Scriptures* are a *sufficient Rule* of Faith and Manners to conduct us to *eternal Life*, this will be enough to evacuate all that is pretended for this *unwritten Word of God*. For *God* and *Nature* we know do nothing in vain; and therefore if *one Word of God* be *sufficient*, *viz.* that which is *written*, what need



have we of this *other* which is *unwritten*? And so I have done with the *first necessary* Property of a Rule of Faith, *viz.* that it be *full*; and shewn at large that the *Holy Scripture* is so as to all Things *necessary* to Salvation; and therefore shall now proceed to.

II. The *Second, viz.* That it be *clear* and *intelligible* to those whose Faith and Manners are to be regulated by it.

I do not mean when I say that the *Scripture* is *clear*, and *plain*, and *intelligible* to all those to whom it is a Rule of Faith and Manners, that it is throughout so in all its Proposals. For it cannot be denied but there are many Things not only in St. Paul's Epistles, but also in *other* Parts of *Scripture*, *hard to be understood*; and such as do not only exceed the Apprehension of *common* Capacities; but also puzzle the Understandings of the most *acute* and *profound* Enquirers, But that which I assert is this, That all those Doctrines of Faith, and Rules of Manners which are *necessary* for Men to believe and practise in order to their Attainment of *eternal* Life, are so plainly and clearly revealed in *Scripture* that there is no *honest teachable* Mind that is *capable* of understanding *common* Sense, but may from thence receive *full* Information of them upon *faithful* and *diligent* Enquiry. And though in *some* Texts these *Necessaries* are not so plainly proposed as in *others*, yet in *some* Text or *other* they are all of them so plainly proposed that no Man can read the *Scripture*, and still be *ignorant* of them without being wilfully *blind*; for which there is no Remedy either in the *Scripture*, or out of it. And this I shall endeavour to prove,

1. From

1. From the *express* Testimony of *Scripture*.
2. From the *avowed* Design of writing the *Scripture*.
3. From the *frequent* Commands *God* lays upon us to read the *Scripture*.
4. From the Obligation that lies upon us under Pain of Damnation to believe, and receive all those *Necessaries* to Salvation contained in it.

1. From the *express* Testimony of *Scripture* it is evident, that in all Things *necessary* to Salvation at least, the *Scripture* is *clear* and *plain*. For to be sure if in any thing the *Scripture* be *plain*, it is in those Things that are most *necessary* to be believed and known ; and therefore if it be *obscure* in these Things, we may reasonable presume it is *plain* in nothing : But that it is in many Things *plain* and *easy* to be understood, is evident from its *own* Testimony : For thus of the *Mosaick* Law it is expressly affirmed by *Moses*, *This Commandment which I command thee this day, it is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off*, *Dent.* 30. 11. Where *Moses* speaks not only of the *Ten Commandments*, which consisting for the most part of *Laws* of *Nature*, are upon that Account more *easy* to be understood ; but of all the *Commandments* of *Moses* in general, whether *Ceremonial*, *Judicial*, or *Natural*. For so, *v.* 16. *This Commandment*, we find, contains as well the *Statutes* and *Judgments*, as the *Commandments* of the *Law*, all which must take in the whole *Mosaick* Institution. And accordingly, *Pf.* 119. 105. *David* calls this *Word of God*, *a lamp unto his feet, and a light unto his path*; which how could it be if it did not burn *clear* enough to guide

guide and direct him? and if it did, then to be sure it burnt clear enough to direct him in those Things wherein it was most *necessary* for him to be directed. Again in the 19th Ps. v. 7, 8, we are told, that the *Testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple*; and that the *Commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightning the eyes*. But how can any Law make the *simple*, *wise*, or enlighten the Eyes of Men, unless it be so plainly and clearly delivered as that the *simple* may be capable of apprehending, and the Eyes of Men of discerning the Sense of it? I know it is objected by *Bellarmin*, that these Words do only imply that this Law indeed being understood, doth enlighten Mens Eyes, and direct their Practice; but by no means that it is *plain* and *easy* to be understood. But this is a *meer* Cavil; for it's plain that it is by understanding the Law, that the *simple* are made *wise*, and the Eyes of Men enlightned. If therefore this Law be so *obscure* in its self as that it cannot make it self understood by all that sincerely enquire into it, how is it *possible* that it should make them *wise*, or enlighten the Eyes of their Minds? But it's plain that the Intent of those Passages of *David* was to excite, and encourage Men to study and observe the Law: But what though the Law makes the *simple*, *wise*, when they understand it? what Encouragement is this for the *simple* to study it, if it be so *obscure* that they cannot understand it? And since they must understand it before they can observe it, what Encouragement doth this Consideration give them to observe it, that it will make them *wise* when they understand it, if it be not plain enough for them to understand it? But then that forecited  
Passage

Passage of *Moses* doth in *express* Words contradict this Cavil of *Bellarmin* ; for he tells the People that the *Commandment* he gave them was not hidden from them ; whereas if it had been so obscurely delivered to them by *Moses*, that upon their *sincere* and *diligent* Enquiry they could not understand it, it is certain that it had been still hidden from them how *wise* soever it might make them when they did understand it : And to say that such a Proposition will make me *wise* when I do understand it, is no Argument at all that it is not hidden from me if it be so obscurely expressed, as that upon my *sincere* Enquiry I am not capable of understanding it. But that the *Old Testament* at least in all necessary Matters was plain enough even to common Capacities, is evident from the frequent Appeals our *Saviour* makes to it in his Contests with the Common People of the Jews. Thus in the Text he bids them, *Search the Scriptures, for they are they which testify of me* ; and in other Places *What saith the Scripture ?* and doth not the Scripture say so and so ? Now how *impertinent* would it have been for our *Saviour* thus to appeal to it at the Tribunal of the People, if he thought it so *obscure* that the People were not capable of understanding it ? How *trifling* would it be for a Man to appeal to *Suarez's Metaphysicks* in a Controversy with a *Plow-man*, or to refer him to *Euclid's Elements* for the determining the Bounds and Measures of a Field ?

And as from what hath been said, 'tis apparent that the *Scriptures* of the *Old Testament* were at least in all *Necessaries* plain and clear to the Jews ; so it is no less evident that the *Scripture* of the *New Testament*



*Testament* are so to *Christians*, since it gives the same Testimony to it self of its own Clearness, as the *Old Testament* doth. For thus, 2 *Cor.* 4. 2, 3, 4. the Apostle tells us, that they did not handle the Word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the Truth, commending themselves to Mens Consciences in the sight of God. But if our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost; in whom the God of this World hath blinded the Minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the Image of God, should shine unto them. Supposing then that they wrote with the same Plainness and Clearness with which they spake, (which there is no shadow of Reason to doubt of) then from these Words it is evident; First, That they did neither in their Preaching nor Writings affect to discourse dubiously or obscurely, but that their great Design was so to manifest and make known the Truth as that by their Plainness and Simplicity they might recommend themselves to the Consciences of all that heard or read them: Secondly, That in Fact they had in their Sermons and Writings so clearly taught the Gospel, that if after all it remained hidden or obscure to any, it was only to such as were lost and irrecoverable. Thirdly, That that which render'd the Gospel which they had taught and written, hidden or obscure to such, was not the Obscurity either of the Matter which they taught, or of their Manner of Teaching it, but their own worldly Affections which blinded their Eyes, and hindred them from seeing that which in its self was illustriously visible. Which is an unanswerable Evidence of the Clearness and Plainness of the Scriptures of the New Testament in all necessary Things;

Things; for if they are *clear* to all but such as wilfully shut their Eyes against them, they are as *clear* as they need be to *honest* and *teachable* Minds; for there is nothing can be *clear* enough to such, as are not willing to understand. And accordingly the *Gospel*, which the Apostle calls *the Grace of God which bringeth Salvation*, is said to have *appeared*, or *shone forth*, to all Men; *teaching us, that denying Ungodliness and worldly Lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present World, Tit.*

2. 11. Now if the *Gospel* did *shine forth* unto all Men, it must be in the *Sermons* and *Discourses* of those that had preached it to the World; and if they *so* preached it as that it *shone forth* to all Men, they must necessarily have preached it very plainly and clearly: Either therefore it was wrote as it was preached, or it was not; if it was not, it was not wrote truly and sincerely; if it was, it was wrote very plainly, so as to make it appear and *shine forth* to all that read it. 'Tis true, there are some Things *obscure* both in the *Old Scriptures* and *New*; but then these are such Things as are no Parts of the *Necessaries* and *Essentials* of Religion; such Things as Men may be safely *ignorant* of, or be *mistaken* about, without any hazard of their *eternal* Life. For all that the *fore-cited* Testimonies prove is only this, that *that true Religion* by which God governs the Faith and Manners of Men, is so far forth as it is *necessary* to be believed and practised, plainly and clearly revealed to them in the *Holy Scriptures*. But besides this, all Men agree there are a great many other Things revealed in *Holy Scripture*, which, because they are not *necessary* for all Men to understand, are many of them not so plainly

plainly revealed as that all Men may understand them. But since the *Scripture* was written to teach and instruct Men, to be sure it teaches them most plainly that which is most *necessary* for them to know ; and therefore since there are some Things plainly taught in *Scripture*, as is evident to any one that reads it, to be sure among these Things are contained all that is *necessary* for Men to know and understand.

2. From the *avowed* Design of writing the *Scripture* it is also evident, that in all Things *necessary* it is plain and clear. For thus concerning the *Old Testament*, St. Paul tells us that *whatsoever things were written afore time, were written for our learning ; that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope, Rom. 15. 4.* And if they were written for our Learning and Instruction, to be sure they were so written as to teach and instruct us, that is, plainly and clearly, especially as to those Things wherein we have most need to be instructed. And then as for the *New Testament*, St. Luke tells his *Theophilus*, that the Reason of his writing his *Gospel* was that he might know the certainty of those things that were surely believed among *Christians*, and wherein he himself had been instructed ; And if it were to ascertain us of the Principles of *Christianity* that he wrote his *Gospel*, certainly he would take care to write it after such a Manner as that those that read it might understand it, otherwise he must run counter to his *own* Design. Thus also St. John saith, that he wrote his *Gospel* that Men might believe that *Jesus is the Christ the Son of God* ; but how could his *Gospel* induce Men

to believe This, unless it be so *written* as that Men may understand it? And so also for his Epistles he tells us, that he wrote them that *they that believed in Jesus might know that they have eternal Life, and that they may believe, or continue to believe, on the name of the Son of God*: And if this were his End, to be sure he would take care to write so as that they might understand; otherwise how could they know by his Writing that they had *eternal Life*, or be moved thereby to continue to believe on the name of Jesus? For there is nothing can create in Men either Knowledge or Faith, but what they understand. Seeing therefore the *great End* of Writing the *Scripture* was to instruct the World in the *great Things of Religion*, either we must say that both the Writers of the *Scripture*, and the *Holy Ghost* that inspired them were *defective* in Skill, or in Care so to write as to obtain this End; or that their Writings are an *effectual Means* to obtain it, which it is *impossible* for them to be, unless they are *plain and clear* as to the *great Things of Religion*. In short every *wise Agent* pursues his End by the most *proper and effectual Means*; and I would fain know whether to write plainly or obscurely be the most *proper Means* to instruct Men by Writing; if to write plainly, then either the *Apostles* wrote so, or they were not *wise Agents*, since to instruct was the *great End* of their Writing. The most *natural Way* of conveying to Mens Minds the Notices of Things is by Words either *spoken or written*, and seeing whatsoever can be *spoken in plain and intelligible Words* may be *written in the same Words*, there can be no doubt



doubt but those Words will be as *intelligible* when they are *written*, as when they are *spoken*; for why should the same Words be more *obscure* when conveyed to us by our Eyes, than when conveyed to us by our Ears? Seeing then the Sense of *Scripture* may be as plainly conveyed by Words *written* as by Words *spoken*, and seeing that even those who deny the Plainness of *Scripture* do yet allow that the Sense of it may be plainly conveyed by Words spoken, or which is the same thing, *Oral Tradition*; if the *Scripture* be not *plain* it can be resolved into no *other* Reason but this, that *God* would not have it so; for there is no Doubt but he could have *spoken* as plainly as Men, and have *written* as plainly as he spoke; and therefore if he hath not done so, it was because he would not; but to say that he would not write those Things plainly which he thought *necessary* for all Men to know, and which he wrote on purpose that all Men might know, is to say that he would, and would not at the same time; or that he wrote them on purpose that Men might know them, and yet that he wrote so as that they might not know them.

3. From the frequent Commands *God* lays upon us to read the *Scripture* it is also evident, that in all *necessary* Things it is *plain* and *clear*. That *God* doth not only allow, but will and require us to read the *Scripture*, I shall shew at large hereafter, when I come to treat of *searching the Scripture*. Supposing therefore at present the Thing to be *true*, I would fain know to what purpose should *God* require us to read the *Scripture*, if in those things which are *necessary* for Men to know  
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and believe, it be not *plain* and *intelligible*. Doth God require us to read it, for the sake of reading it, or for the sake of understanding it? If the former, reading any other Book might as well have answered God's End as reading the *Scripture*; because reading is reading whatsoever it be that we read; if the later, then either the *Scripture* is *plain* and *intelligible* as to all those Things which he requires us to understand, or he requires us to read it in vain. For to what Purpose should we read that we may understand, if that which we are to read be not *plain* enough to be understood by us? As for Instance; the *Bereans*, *Acts* 17. 11. are highly commended for *searching the Scriptures daily*; now I would fain know was this a Virtue in them, or was it not? If not, why are they commended for it; if it were, it was certainly their Duty. What was the Intendment of it; was it only that they might be expert Readers? Why are they so commended for reading the *Scriptures* above any other Book, seeing that reading any other Book would have done as well for that Purpose as reading the *Scriptures*? But the Text it self tells us that the Intendment of their reading the *Scripture* was, that they might know whether those things were so or no which St. Paul had preached to them; but how should they know this by reading the *Scripture*, if the *Scripture* which they read were not *plain* enough to be understood by them? Again St. Paul gives this as a great Commendation of his Son *Timothy*, that from a Child he had known the *Holy Scriptures*; whence by the Way we may learn, that it is not so great a Reproach to our Church as the Roman-

*ists* intend it for, that we permit *Women* and *Children*, *Tinkers* and *Coblers* to read the *Scripture*. But I pray, what was the Meaning of *Timothy's* knowing the *Holy Scripture from a Child*? Was it that he knew the Words of it only, or the Sense of it also? If the former, a *Parrot* may be taught as much as *Timothy* had learned, and consequently deserve as high a Commendation as he; if the latter, then it seems the *Scripture* is plain enough for a well-disposed Child to know the Sense of it, so far forth at least as it is necessary to be known, and this is as much as we desire. If therefore God requires us to read the *Scripture*, as *Timothy* did, to the End that we may know and understand it as he did, then either we may understand the Sense of it by reading it, or else God requires us to read it in vain.

4. And lastly; From the Obligation we lie under upon pain of Damnation to believe and receive those *Necessaries* to Salvation contained in *Scripture*, it is also evident that as to all those *Necessaries* it is plain and clear. That we are obliged to believe under pain of Damnation all that the *Scripture* proposes as necessary to our Salvation, is agreed on all hands; but how can Men be justly obliged to believe such Things as are obscure, and doubtful, and uncertain, and of which they can have no certain Knowledge? Either the *Necessaries* to Salvation must be plainly and clearly express'd in *Scripture*, or we have not sufficient Reason to believe them; and to say God will damn us for not believing those Things which he hath not given us sufficient Reason to believe, is to charge him with the most outrageous Oppression

sion and Injustice. But we are told that though *God* hath not clearly revealed to us in *Scripture* those Things which he hath obliged us to believe upon Pain of Damnation, yet he hath left us *sufficient* Reason to believe them ; for he hath left us to the Conduct of an *Infallible Church*, that is to say, of the *present Church of Rome* in all Ages, whom he hath *authorized* to explain and define to us all Things that are *necessary* to be believed, which we are to receive upon her Authority, and not upon the *Scriptures*; so that if we firmly believe what She defines and proposes to us, we are sure to believe all Things that are *necessary* to be believed. Now in Answer to this Objection, which indeed is the *great* Foundation that the Faith of those of the *present Church of Rome* relies on, I desire these Things may be seriously considered.

1. That before we can reasonably rely upon the Authority of the *present Church of Rome* in defining and proposing to us the Articles of our Faith, there are *sundry* Things that we must believe upon the Authority of *Scripture*.

2. That these Things which we must believe from *Scripture* before we can rely upon the Authority of *that Church*, are at least as obscurely revealed in *Scripture* as any other Article of our *Christian* Faith.

3. That after all these Things, upon our relying on that *Church's* Authority, we are left to the *same* or *greater* Uncertainties than upon our relying upon the Authority of *Scripture*.

4. That in relying upon the Authority of the *Scripture* we are left to no other Uncertainties



than just what is *necessary* to render our Faith *virtuous* and *rewardable*; whereas by relying upon the Authority of *that Church*, supposing it to be a *certain* Ground, as it is pretended, our Faith would have *little* or *nothing* of *Virtue* in it.

1. That before we can reasonably rely upon the Authority of *that Church* in defining and proposing to us the Articles of our Faith, there are *undry* Things that we must believe upon the Authority of *Scripture*. As for Instance; we must in the *first* Place believe that there is a *Church*, or Society of *Christians* separated from the World, or incorporated by a *peculiar Divine* Charter. Now whether there be such a *Church* or no is a Question that must be resolved by the *Scripture*, and not by the *Church*; because to believe that there is a *Church* because the *Church* saith there is a *Church*, is to take that for granted which is the Thing in Question. *Secondly*, We must believe that this *Church* hath Authority to define and propose to us the Articles of our Faith, which must also for the same Reason be believed on the Authority of the *Scripture*, and not of the *Church*. For to believe that there is a *Church* that hath Authority to propose to us the Articles of our Faith, is to believe that there is a *Church* which we are obliged to believe; and how can I believe this upon the *Church's* Authority, unless I can believe it before I do believe it? *Thirdly*, Before we can rely upon this *Church's* Authority in defining and proposing to us the Articles of our Faith, we must believe that this *Church* is *infallible*; for if  
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she be not *Infallible*, how is it *consistent* with the Truth of *God* to oblige us to believe Her, seeing in so doing he must oblige us whensoever She errs to believe her Errors? but that she is *infallible* is not to be believed upon her *own* Authority; for then her *infallible* Authority must be the Reason of our Belief that She is *Infallible*, that is, we must believe her *infallible*, because we believe her *infallible*. Seeing then we cannot believe it on her *own* Authority, if we believe it at all, it must be upon the Authority of *Scripture*. *Fourthly*, Before we can rely upon the *Church of Rome's* Authority to define to us the Articles of our Faith, we must believe the *Church of Rome* to be this *infallible* Church: But seeing this is no *self-evident* Principle, we must have some *other* Evidence besides her self to induce us to believe it; and what else can that be but *Scripture*? We are told indeed by some of her *greatest* Divines, that there are *certain* Marks and Notes of a *true Church* peculiar to the *Church of Rome*, by which we are obliged to believe Her the *true Church*; such as *Antiquity*, *Universality*, *Holiness of Doctrine*, &c. But seeing no Doctrine can be *holy* that is not *true*, we must be satisfied that *that Church* is *true* before we can know that it is *holy*; so that before we can reasonably submit to her Authority, we must be very well assured that her Doctrine is *true*, and this we cannot be assured of by her Authority, because that as yet is the Matter in Question; and therefore we can be no otherwise assured of it, but only by the Authority of *Scripture*; and when we are assured beforehand by the Authority of *Scripture* that her Doctrines are

true, her Authority comes too late to assure us. Seeing therefore it is evident that there are some, if not all the Articles of the *Roman Faith* that must be known and believed by us upon the Authority of *Scripture* before we can safely rely upon her Authority to define them to us, how can we be obliged to settle our Faith upon her Authority, when as before we can reasonably admit her Authority, we must believe several of the Articles of our Faith upon the Authority of *Scripture*? For I would fain know, are these Articles of Faith, or no? That there is a Church; that this Church hath Authority to define the Articles of our Faith, and that in so defining, this Church is infallible, and that this infallible Church is the Church of Rome? If they be, as they themselves own they are, then there are some Articles it seems that must be believed without the Church's Authority upon the single Authority of *Scripture*; and if some, why not all? why should not the *Scripture* be as sufficient to authorize us to believe the Rest as these, since its Authority is as great in one Text as in another? Especially considering

2. That these things which we must believe from *Scripture* before we can rely upon the Authority of the Church of Rome, are at least as obscurely revealed in *Scripture* as any other Article of our *Christian Faith*. The great Reason urged by the *Romanists* against our Relyance upon the *Scripture* for our Faith is the Obscurity of it; and if this be a good Reason it proves a great deal more then they would have it, viz. that we ought not to rely upon *Scripture* even for those Articles, without believing of which we can

have

have no *sufficient* Ground to rely upon the Authority of their *Church*. For I would fain know, is it *clear* and *plain* from Scripture that the *present Catholick Church* of every Age hath Authority to define the Articles of Faith, and that in all its Definitions it is *infallible*? and that the *present Church of Rome* is this *Catholick Church*? If so; how come those Texts upon which those Articles are founded to be understood in a quite *different* Sense, not only by us, but by the *greatest* part of the *Primitive Fathers*, as hath been abundantly proved by *Protestant Writers*? Supposing that we should be so *blinded* by our Partiality to *our own* Tenets as to misapprehend *plain* and *clear* Expressions of Scripture, it is very *strange* methinks that the *Fathers* who were never engaged in the Controversy, and so could not be bias'd either *one way* or *t'other*, should yet misapprehend them too. What is this but to say that let Men be never so *indifferent*, yet they may be easily mistaken in the Sense of very *plain* and *clear* Expressions; and if so, what signifies either Speaking or Writing? But to proceed to some Instances; will any *modest* Man in the World affirm that the *Church of Rome's infallibility* in defining Articles of Faith to all *succeeding* Generations is more plainly express'd in those Words of our Saviour, *Thou art Peter, and upon this Rock will I build my Church*, than the Divinity of our Saviour is in the Beginning of the *first* Chapter of *St. John's Gospel*, where it is expressly affirmed that he is *God*, whereas in the *other* there is not the least mention either of the *Church of Rome*, or of *Infallibility*, or defining



Articles of Faith? Why may we not then as well depend upon the *one* Text for the Article of our *Saviour's Divinity*, as upon the *other* for that of the *Church of Rome's Infallibility*? Again, are there not *innumerable* Texts of Scripture wherein the Articles of *Remission of Sin, the Resurrection of the Dead, the last Judgment, and the World to come* are at least as plainly exprest as the *present Church of Rome's Infallibility* is in any of those Texts that are urged in the Defence of it? and therefore if we believe the *later* upon the Authority of *Scripture*, notwithstanding the pretended Obscurity of it, why may we not as well upon the same Authority believe all the *former*, since the *former* are at least as plainly exprest as the *later*? Either therefore the *Scripture* is plain enough to be relied upon as to *this* Article of the *Church of Rome's Infallibility*, or it is not; if it be not, we have no Ground for our Dependance upon the Authority of her Definitions and Proposals; if it be, it's plain enough to be relied upon in all other *necessary* Articles of Faith, since these are all as plainly at least exprest'd in *Scripture* as that. For if we may not rely upon *Scripture* because it is not plain, then where it is equally plain, it is equally to be relied on.

3. That when we come to rely upon this *Church's* Authority, we are exposed to far *greater* Uncertainties than while we relied upon the Authority of *Scripture*. For in the *first* place, we are of all sides agreed that the *Scripture* is *Infallible*, and that *such* and *such* Writings are Parts of *Scripture*; and therefore are absolutely *secure* that if  
we

we follow the *true* Sense of it, it cannot mislead us. But the much *greater* Part of *Christians* deny that the *Church of Rome* is *Infallible*; even the *Church of Rome* it self owns the Authority we rely on to be *infallible*, but all *Christians* all the World over, besides those of her *own* Communion, disallow *hers* to be so; and to forsake our Dependence upon an *Infallibility* which *all* own, to rely upon an *Infallibility* which but *few* in Comparison admit, is certainly a very *dangerous* Venture. And then *Secondly*, As for the *Infallibility* of *Scripture* we are *certain* where to find it; *viz.* in every Text, and in every Proposition therein contained, which being all the *Word of God*, must be all *infallible*. But as for the *Infallibility* of the *Roman Church*, as they have handled the Matter, it is almost as *difficult* to find as to prove it; some cry, lo it is here; and some, lo it is there; some place it in the *Pope* only, others in the *Pope* and his *College of Cardinals*; some in the *Pope* presiding in a *General Council*, others in a *General Council* whether the *Pope* preside in it, or no. So that in this *Church*, it seems, there is *Infallibility* somewhere, but what are we the better for it if we know not where to find it? If we go to the *Pope* for it; there have been *two* or *three Popes* at once that have decreed against *one another*; and therefore *one* or *another* of them to be sure were mistaken. How then shall we know which is the *true infallible* one? And when I have found the *true Pope*, others tell me I am not yet arrived at the Seat of *Infallibility* until I have found him in his *College of Cardinals*; and when I have found him here I am still to seek, seeing I find the same *Pope* (*Eugenius the Fourth* for Instance) decreeing

decreeing *one* Thing in his *College of Cardinals*, and the quite *contrary* in a *general Council*; and therefore I am sure he could not be *infallible* in both. Therefore others send me to the *Pope* in a *General Council*; but when I come thither, I find my self at a Loss again; because I meet with several Instances of *one Pope's* defining *one* Thing in *one General Council*, and *another Pope*, the quite *contrary* in *another*; and therefore in *one* or *t'other Council* I am sure, the *one* or *t'other Pope* was mistaken. And as for *General Councils* themselves there are *sundry* of them which are owned by *some*, and rejected by *others* of the *principal Doctors* of the *Roman Communion*. And even when *Councils* are legally assembled, there are so many *nice* Disputes among them, what it is that makes them *General*, and when it is that they act *Conciliariter* as they call it, that is, so as to render their *Decrees* perpetually and universally obliging; that though we were resolved to build our Faith upon the Authority of *this Church*, yet if we will use that Caution in believing that we ought to do in a Matter of so great Moment, we should find our selves involved in greater Uncertainties concerning these Things than we are concerning the Sense even of the most *difficult* Places of *Scripture*. But then *Thirdly*, When we are pass'd over all these Difficulties we are still at as great a Loss to understand what is the Sense of the *Church* to be believed by us, as what is the Sense of *Scripture*. For the *Church* hath no *other* way to deliver her Sense to us but either by *Oral Tradition*, that is, by Word of Mouth; or by *Writing*; If She deliver her Sense to me by *Oral Tradition*, how can I know what that is who never heard Her speak either

ther in its *diffused* Body, or in a *General Council*, or in any *other* Representative; unless it be that of my own *Parish-Priest* perhaps, who for all I know may be *Ignorant* or *Heretical*, and so either not understand himself the *Church's Oral Tradition*, or wilfully pervert it to a *contrary* Meaning? And if the *Church* deliver her Sense to me by Writing, as She hath done in the *written* Decrees of her *General Councils*, must I read over all her Decrees? How should I do that who understand not so much as the Languages in which they are written? Or suppose they were Translated, how shall I know that they are faithfully render'd any more than I do that the *Scripture* is so? But suppose I were *certain* of this, and should thereupon proceed to read them, alas, I find in them a *great* many *difficult* and *dubious* Expressions, yea, and at least *seeming* Contradictions to *each other*; how then can I be more certain of the true Sense of these Writings than of the Sense of the Writings of *Scripture*? But you will say, the *Church* hath digested her Sense of all her Articles of Faith into a *plain Creed* and *Catechism*, viz. that of the *Council of Trent*, whereby the plainest Reader may without any *laborious* Enquiries be ready instructed what he ought to believe. This I confess is something; but as for those Articles of Faith wherein *We* and the *Church of Rome* are agreed, we find them as plainly express'd in *Scripture* as in that *Creed* and *Catechism*; and therefore we have Reason to believe that if those Articles wherein we disagree had ever been intended for Articles of Faith, they would have been as plainly express'd there as these; but 'tis no wonder we should not find them plainly express'd



press'd *there*, when we cannot find them express'd *there* at all. But do we not find that the Scriptures even in the *plainest* Expressions of Articles of Faith have yet been perverted by *Hereticks*, into a *contrary* Meaning? And what then? Are not the Words of *Councils* as liable to be perverted into a *contrary* Meaning as the Words of *Scripture*? For do not the *Roman* Doctors differ as much about the Sense of their *Councils*, as we do about the Sense of our *Scriptures*? Yea and have we not a *notorious* Instance of it at this very Day? For what can be more *contrary* than *Belarmine's* Exposition of the *Trent Faith*, and the *Bishop of Condom's*? And yet both allowed by the *Pope*, who by the Authority of that *Council* is made *sole* Arbitrator of the Sense of it. But then *Fourthly* and lastly, As to the Sense of *Scripture* our Reliance on the Authority of that *Church* leaves us at as *great* an Uncertainty as it found us. For where the *Scripture* designs to speak plainly, as it doth in all Things *necessary* to Salvation, the *Church* cannot speak *plainer*; and therefore there we may understand the *Scripture* as well without the *Church* as with it; but where it doth not speak plainly, the *Church of Rome* hath left us no *infallible* Commentary whereby to understand it; so that where the *Scripture* is *plain* She hath not made it *plainer*, and where it is *obscure* She hath left it as *obscure* as ever: So that after all the Noise that is made of *Infallibility* her Doctors are fain to apply themselves to the same Methods of Understanding *Scripture*, that is, to consult the Sense of *Antiquity*, and compare Text with Text, and the like that we *fallible* Protestants do; and when they have done all, are as *lyable* to be mistaken as we.

Nay

Nay they themselves confess that even *General Councils* themselves may be mistaken in their Applications of *Scripture*; that is, that they may misapply them to *wrong Purposes*, which they cannot do without mistaking the Sense of them, of which there are a great many *notorious* Instances in the *second Council of Nice*; which to prove it the Duty of *Christians* to worship *Images*, urges God's taking Clay, and making Man after his own Image; and likewise that of *Esay*, *There shall be a Sign and Testimony to the Lord in the Land of Egypt*; and also those Passages of *David*, *Confession and Beauty is before him. Lord I have loved the Beauty of thy House. O Lord my Face hath sought for thee. O Lord I will seek after thy Countenance. O Lord, the light of thy Countenance is sealed over us.* And from that Passage, *As we have seen, so have we heard*, they argue that there must be Images to look on; and because it is said, *God is marvellous in his Saints*, they conclude that the Church must be deck'd with Pictures: And from *No man lighteth a Candle and putteth it under a bushel*, they wisely infer that Images must be set upon the Altar; all which are as remote from their Sense as the first Verse of the first Chapter of *Genesis*. What greater Certainty have they with their *Infallibility* than we without it? We can know as well the Sense of plain Texts of *Scripture*, as of plain Texts of *Councils*, or *Creeds*, or *Catechisms*; and we can as easily pervert the Sense of the one as of the other: And as for those that are not plain, even *General Councils* you see for all their *Infallibility* may be mistaken about them as well as we. So that when all comes to all, by forsaking the infallible Authority of *Scripture* to rely upon the in-

fallible

*fallible* Authority of *that Church*, we are so far from arriving at a *greater* Certainty of Faith that we are involved in *greater* Uncertainties than ever. But then,

4. And lastly, in relying upon the Authority of *Scripture* we are left to no *other* Uncertainties than just what are *necessary* to render our Faith *vertuous* and *rewardable* ; whereas by relying upon the Authority of the *Church of Rome* (supposing it were as *sure* a Ground of Faith as it is pretended) our Faith would have *little* or *nothing* of Virtue in it. It is pretended (though falsly you see) that *that Church's* Authority is so *sure* a Ground of Faith, that while a Man depends upon it he cannot be mistaken in any *necessary* Article of Faith ; which in Reality amounts to no more than this, That while a Man believes as *that Church* believes, which Infallibly believes all that is *necessary* to Salvation, he infallibly believes all that is *necessary* to Salvation ; and it is equally *true*, that while a Man believes as the *Scripture* teaches, which infallibly teaches all that is *necessary* to Salvation, he infallibly believes all that is *necessary* to Salvation ; that is, both are equally *false*. For no Man can infallibly believe either the *Church* or *Scripture*, because *Infallibility* exceeds the Capacity of *humane* Nature ; no Man can so believe *either* but that he may be mistaken, and if he may be mistaken, its *possible* he may not believe all that is *necessary* to Salvation, whether he grounds his Faith upon the *Church* or the *Scripture*. But because this *Church* pretends so to secure my Faith while I depend upon her Authority as that I cannot be mistaken, for this very Reason I cannot depend upon it, because I am sure of this, that

that *God* never designed for me any such Means of Believing as should render my Faith *infallible*. For to what End should he require me to take so much Pains and Care to secure my Faith from Errors, if he hath furnished me with any *certain* Means of being *infallible*? It would be but applying that Means whatever it is, and my Danger would be immediately over; and then I need trouble my Head no further, being now so *secured* as that I cannot be mistaken; after which it would be very *impertinent* methinks for *God* to trouble me with those *unnecessary* Injunctions of trying all Things, and holding fast to that which is good; of searching the Scriptures, and trying the Spirits whether they be of *God*; and taking heed whilst I stand lest I fall. What need a Man be at the Expence of all this Labour and Caution, whose Faith is already secured? Seeing therefore *God* requires these Things at our Hands, it is a *plain* Case that he never intended us any Method how to be *infallible* in believing; and therefore since the *Church of Rome's* Authority is pretended to be such a Method, for that Reason it ought to be rejected. It's plain that *God* intended that our Faith should be a Grace and a Virtue, and consequently that it should be an Act of our Wills as well as of our Understandings, which supposes the Evidence of it to be *irresistible*; for what Virtue is it to believe that the Sun shines when it glares full in our Eyes? Since therefore our Faith must be a *free* and *voluntary* Assent upon such Motives as are *sufficient* to satisfy an *honest* Mind, but not to compel either an *obstinate* Infidel or *self-deceived* Hypocrite; *God* did not think fit so to secure our Faith as to leave it *impossible* for us to err  
damnablely;



*damnable* ; And, indeed if he had, it would have been no Virtue in us to believe *savingly* ; for what Virtue is it for a Man to do that which it is *impossible* for him not to do ? It is *sufficient* that we cannot err *damnablely* in our Faith without some *damnable* Fault in our Wills ; but if we either refuse to enquire into this Revelation for what is *necessary* for us to believe, or will only enquire into it with a Mind that is byass'd with *wicked* and *sinful* Prejudices, or will not submit our Understandings to it upon the *clearest* Conviction, there is no doubt but we may be *ignorant*, and we may be deceived in Things of the *greatest* Moment, and it is but *just* and *fit* that we should : And if notwithstanding these Faults we could not err, for God's sake what Virtue would it be to be *Orthodox* ? But if with *honest*, *humble*, and *teachable* Minds we will diligently enquire into *divine* Revelation, we shall there find all the *Necessaries* to Salvation so clearly and plainly proposed to us, that 'twill be *morally impossible* for us either to be *ignorant* of, or deceived about them. So that by relying on *Scripture* you see we are exposed to no *other* Uncertainties than just what are *necessary* to render our Faith a Virtue ; and God doth as much require that our Faith should be *virtuous* as that it should be *Orthodox* ; that it should be the Act of an *honest*, *humble*, *diligent*, and *reachable* Mind, as that it should be extended to all Things *necessary* to Salvation. Now our Faith may be *Orthodox* without an *infallible* Certainty, but it cannot be *virtuous* and *rewardable* with it. To what purpose then do the *Romanists* talk of an *infallible* certainty in Believing ? Is it *reasonable* to expect more certainty than God ever intended to give ?

give? He hath given as much as is *necessary* for *honest* Minds and no more, and whether *Knaves* and *Hypocrites* believe *right* or *wrong* is of no great Concernment. If therefore our Faith be *liable* to no other Uncertainty than just what is *necessary* to try our Honesty, that is much *better* for us in Respect of the Virtue of our Faith than an *infallible* Certainty. Supposing therefore that the *Church of Rome* were as *infallible* as it pretends, it is certain that the *Scripture* is as *infallible* as that; but whether we relie upon *one* or *t'other* we are *fallible* still. And could that *Church* render us as *infallibly* *certain* as it pretends, it would thereby preserve indeed the *Orthodoxy* of our Faith, but then at the same Time it would destroy the Virtue of it: For to believe *right* when we cannot believe *wrong* is *fatal* and *necessary*; but to believe *right* when through *our own* Default we may believe *wrong*, this is *virtuous* and *rewardable*.

By what hath been said therefore, I think it is sufficiently evident, that it is upon the *Scripture* we are to relie, and not upon the *Church*, especially upon the *Roman Church*, for all Things *necessary* to Salvation; and therefore since we are obliged to believe these Things upon pain of *Eternal* Damnation, it necessarily follows that they must be *plain* and *clear*, and *Scripture*; otherwise we could not be justly so obliged to believe them. And thus I have shewn at large that the *Scripture* is the *great* Rule of our Faith and Manners, and that as such, it is both *full* and *clear*, as containing in it all Things *necessary* to Salvation, and proposing them so *plainly* and *clearly*, as that upon an *honest* and *diligent* Enquiry all Men may find and discover them.

A

## Second Discourse

Upon JOHN V. 39.

*Search the Scriptures ; for in them ye think ye have eternal life.*

**W**Hether these Words are to be rendred *Indicatively*, [*Ye do search the Scriptures*] as some would have them, or *Imperatively*, [*Search the Scriptures*] as our Translation renders them, amounts to the same thing ; For if we render them *Indicatively*, [*Ye do search the Scriptures*] it is evident, that they are spoken with Approbation, *Ye do read the Scriptures, and ye do very well in so doing* : For thus we find the *Bereans* commended for *Searching the Scriptures*, and *Timothy*, for *knowing them from a Child*. And if to Search the Scripture be a commendable Practice, then to be sure our Saviour here mentions it at least with Approbation ; and what he approves when done, that to be sure he would have us do. Whether therefore it be delivered in the Form of a Command, or of a bare Assertion, it is equivalent to a Command, it being at least an Assertion of a Thing which he approves, and consequently would have all Men to Practise. But because there is a numerous Party in the Christian World which doth not only forbid the People to Search the Scriptures, but represents it as a Practice of very dangerous Consequence, it is hereby

hereby become *necessary* that we should not only assert, but prove their Obligation to it, which otherwise would be very *needless*; there being nothing more *plain* and *evident* in it self. Now to prove that the People are obliged to Search and Read the *Scriptures*, I shall as briefly as I can, argue the Point from these following Topicks.

1. From the Obligations which the *Jews* were under to Read and Search the *Scriptures* of the *Old Testament*.

2. From our *Saviour's* and his *Apostles* Approbation of their Practice in pursuance of this their Obligation.

3. From the *great* Design and Intention of Writing the *Scriptures*.

4. From the Direction of these *Holy Writings* to the People.

5. From the *great* Concernment of the People in the Matters contained in them.

6. From the *Universal* Sense of the *Primitive Church* in this Matter.

1. From the *general* Obligation which the *Jews* were under to Read and Search their *Scriptures*. For so *God* requires them to keep the words which he commanded them, in their *Hearts*, and to teach them diligently to their *Children*, and to talk of them as they sat in their *Houses*, and as they walked in the way, and when they lay down, and when they rose up, and to bind them as a sign upon their hands, Deut. 6. 6, 7, 8. And elsewhere, This book of the Law shall not depart out of thy mouth, but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, speaking to the Children of *Israel* in general, *Jos*.



1. 8. And again, *Ye shall lay up these my words in your heart and in your soul, that your days may be multiplied, and the days of your Children, in the Land which the Lord swore unto your Fathers to give them, as the days of heaven upon the earth, Deut. 11. 18, 21.* And to meditate on God's Law day and night, David makes a Part of the Character of the *Blessed Man*, *Psal. 1. 3.* Now if they could not keep God's Laws in their Hearts, as most certainly they could not; if they could not teach them to their Children; if they could not talk of them upon all just and proper Occasions, and in a word, if they could not meditate on them day and night without being very well acquainted with them by diligent Search and Reading them, it is most certain that to Read and Search into them was their *indispensible* Duty. Now if there be the same Reason why we should Read the *Scriptures* as there was why the *Jews* should, then the Obligation of these Commands must extend to us as well as to them; because the Reason of the Law is the Law; but 'tis evident, even beyond Contradiction, that there is no good Reason assignable for the one, which is not of equal force for the other; and whatsoever is objected by our Adversaries in this Point against our Reading the *Scriptures*, is of equal validity against the *Jews* Reading them. It is Objected, That our Reading them, through our Incapacity to understand them, must occasion a great many *Errors* and *Heresies* in the *Church*. And why should not their Reading them occasion the same, since neither their Understandings were larger than ours, nor their *Scriptures* clearer and more intelligible than ours? It is farther objected, that because of the many ill Examples recorded

corded in *Scripture* it is *dangerous* for the People to read it ; because of their Aptness to be misled and corrupted by Example. But I beseech you, are there not more *bad* Examples in the *Old Testament* than in the *New* ? And were not the *Jews* as apt to be corrupted by them as we *Christians* ? And therefore since these Objections do press as much against their reading the *Scriptures* as ours, it is certain they ought to keep *both* from it or *neither*. Seeing therefore notwithstanding these Objections *God* obliged the *Jews* to read them, it's plain they are not of Force enough to disoblige us from doing the same.

2. From our *Saviour* and his *Apostles* Approbation of this Practice of the *Jews* in Pursuance of their Obligation to it, it is also evident that we are obliged to the same. That the *Common People* of the *Jews* did ordinarily read the *Scriptures* in our *Saviour's* Time, is evident not only from the Text, *Search the Scriptures* ( which if you take them *Indicatively*, are an *express* Declaration that they did read them ; and if you take them *Imperatively*, necessarily imply that they themselves owned that they ought to read them ) but also from those Questions which our *Saviour* frequently ask'd them in his Conferences with them ; such as, *Have ye not read ? Have ye never read in the Scripture ? And hath not the Scripture said so and so ?* Which Question would be very *Impertinent* if reading the *Scripture* were not then ordinarily practised by that People. And that even their *holy Women* were then so well instructed in the *Scriptures* as to be able to instruct their Children, *Timothy* is a *signal* Instance, who, though his *Father* were an *Heathen*, had *known the holy Scriptures from*

a Child, 2 Tim. 3. 15. which knowledge he must necessarily have derived from his *Grand-Mother Lois*, and his *Mother Eunice*, whose Faith St. Paul celebrates; 2 Tim. 1. 5. And this Practice of reading the Scriptures which was so common among that People in our Saviour's time is so far from being discontinued either by himself or his *Apostles*, that it is always mentioned by them with Applause and Approbation. Thus the *Bereans* are commended as a People of a nobler Strain than those of *Thessalonica*, because they searched the Scriptures daily whether those Things which St. Paul had preached to them were so or no. And St. Paul is so far from reprehending *Timothy* for meddling with the Scriptures whilst he was a *Lay-man*, that he mentions it to his Honour, that he had known the Scriptures from a Child. And in all those Passages wherein our Saviour takes it for granted that the Common People of the *Jews* did read the Scripture, we have not the least Intimation of his dislike of their Practice, which we should certainly have had, had he apprehended it to be either dangerous or unwarrantable. Seeing therefore neither our Saviour nor his *Apostles* do in the least disallow of the Scriptures being read by the Common People, but on the contrary do expressly commend it; this is a plain Argument that it was their Intention to perpetuate the Practice of it to future Ages. For seeing the *Jews* read the Scriptures in Obedience to an express Command of God, as was shewn before, had our Saviour intended that they should not continue it, he would doubtless have repealed that Command by some Countermand, which he was so far from doing that he not only every where allows of their reading

reading the *Scriptures*, but also expressly approves and commends it; whereby he plainly establishes the *Obligation* of that *ancient* Command in Obedience to which they did read them.

3. From the *great* Design and Intention of Writing the *Scriptures*, it is also evident, that the *People* are still obliged to Read them. It is plain the *great* Design of Writing the *Scripture* was to instruct Men in the Knowledge, and persuade them to the Practice of *True Religion*; For thus of the *Scriptures* of the *Old Testament* St. Paul tells us, That *whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning*, Rom. 15. 4. and for our admonition, 1 Cor. 10. 11. And as for the *New Testament*, we are told, That it was written that we might believe that *Jesus is the Christ the Son of God*, and that believing we might have life through his name, Joh. 20. 31. And St. Peter tells us, That he wrote both his Epistles to stir up the pure Minds of *Christians* by way of remembrance, and to put them in mind of the words which were spoken before by the *Holy Prophets*, and of the *Commandment* of the *Apostles* of our Lord and Saviour, 2 Pet. 3. 1. And St. John gives us this account of his Writing his Epistles, *These things have I written to you that ye sin not*, 1 Joh. 2. 1. And St. Jude, this of his, *Beloved*; when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common Salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the Saints, v. 3. These are the Ends for which the *Scripture* was written; but how can the Writing of it contribute to these Ends if we are not permitted to Read what is written? For the *Scripture* was written to the *People* as well as to the *Clergy*, as I shall



shew by and by ; but to what purpose should it be written to the *People* to instruct and admonish them, if the *People* are not allowed to Read its Instructions and Admonitions ? What Influence could the Writing it have upon the *People's* Belief, that *Jesus Christ is the Son of God*, if they had been debar'd from acquainting themselves with what is written concerning him ? How could it stir up their Remembrance, if they might not Read what it suggested to their Memory ? By what *other* way can it keep the *People* from Sinning, but by Motives and Persuasions ? But how should its Motives and Persuasions affect their Minds if they are not allowed to consult and understand them ? Upon what Account can it move the *People* earnestly to contend for the Faith once delivered to the Saints, if they are not allowed to learn from it either what that Faith is, or what those Reasons are which oblige them to contend for it ? So that to write to the *People* on purpose to instruct and reform them, and at the same time to purpose to debar them from Reading it, is either to suppose, that the Writing will operate like a Charm, or to purpose a downright Contradiction. For how oddly would it have lookt, if in the *above-cited* Passages, the *Apostles* had exprest themselves thus :  
' *These things are written for your Learning and Ad-*  
' *monition ; but 'tis by no means fit you should learn from*  
' *them what they teach and admonish you. These Things*  
' *are written that ye should believe that Jesus is the*  
' *Christ and the Son of God ; but they are not written that*  
' *you should enquire of them whether Jesus be the Christ*  
' *or the Son of God. These Things are written to put*  
' *you in Mind of what hath been spoken by the Prophets*  
' *and*

‘and Apostles; but they were not written that you  
‘might acquaint your selves by them what the Prophets  
‘and Apostles spake. These Things are written that you  
‘should not Sin; but beware you do not read them lest  
‘the bad Examples recorded in them occasion you to Sin.  
In short, ‘These Things were written to excite you  
‘earnestly to contend for the Faith once delivered to  
‘the Saints; but you are by no means allowed to enquire  
‘into them lest you should misunderstand them, and  
‘and so instead of contending for the Faith you should  
‘contend for Heresie and False Doctrine. Had the  
Apostles thus express’d themselves, I appeal to any  
reasonable Man whether these Passages would not  
have startled his Understanding, and tempted him  
to question whether the Authors of them were  
well in their Wits; and yet this must have been  
their meaning, supposing that they meant that the  
People should not read what they wrote.

4. From the Direction of these *Holy Writings*  
to the *People*, it is also evident, that the *People* are  
still obliged to Read, or acquaint themselves with  
them. For so we find the Law of *Moses* was deli-  
vered by *God* to all the *People* as well as to him and  
*Aaron*; and (as was shewn before) they were all  
of them commanded to search and enquire into it.  
And so also were the *Sermons* of the *Prophets*,  
which are usually prefaced with an, *Hear O Israel,*  
*Hear O House of Judah,* *Hear O House of Jacob,* and  
*Hear all ye of Judah.* So also our *Blessed Saviour*  
Preach’d his *Sermons* and *Parables*, not only to his  
Apostles, and *Seventy Disciples*, but also to the  
People, and to the Multitudes. And so also his A-  
postles direct their *Epistles*, not only to the *Saints*, to  
the faithful in *Christ Jesus*, to the *Beloved*, which in  
the

the Language of *Scripture* includes every *Christian*; but also to all that are at *Rome*, to all that in every place call upon the name of *Jesus Christ* our Lord, to all the *Saints* which are in *Achaia*, to all the *Saints* which are at *Philippi*, to the twelve Tribes which are scattered abroad, to the Strangers scattered through *Pontus*, *Galatia*, &c. and to them which have obtained like precious Faith with us, that is, to all the Jewish Christians dispersed over the World. Seeing therefore the *Scriptures* were directed to all, as well *Lay* as *Clergy*, this not only gives a Right to all to Read them, but also lays an Obligation upon all to acquaint themselves with them. For the very directing such a Writing or Epistle to *such* or *such* Persons, doth, in the Sense of all the World, imply, that he who writes doth design and intend, that they to whom he directs it should Read and Peruse it; and therefore, since the *Scriptures* were written to all, that is a plain Intimation, that it was the Intention of the Writers that all should Read them. And for us not to Read what God hath written, and directed to us, is by implication of Fact, a *Prophane* Neglect and Contempt of his Mercy, and looks as if we either thought him such an *Insignificant* Being, or our selves so little concerned in any thing that he can say or write to us, as that it would not be worth our while to receive, and peruse the Contents of those *Sacred* Epistles, which by the Hands of his *Holy Penmen* he hath vouchsafed to direct to us. Nor is it a *sufficient* Excuse for our Contempt, to say, that in Consideration of our own Proneness to Err and Mistake, we ought to content our selves with this, that our *Spiritual Guides* should Read God's Writings for us, and deliver the Sense and Contents of

of them to us : For to be sure, had *God* intended that the *Priests* only should read them, he would have directed them only to the *Priests*, and ordered them only to deliver the Sense of them to the *People*; and therefore since he hath directed them to *both*, this necessarily implies that it was his Intention that *both* should read them. For if *God* had not directed them to Men, neither *Priests* nor *People* were obliged to read them; and therefore seeing the *great* Reason why any Men ought to Read them is, because they are directed to Men, this Reason obliges all Men to Read them; because they are directed to all Men. For not to be highly concerned to know and understand what it is that *God* writes to us is an Argument that we have a very *mean* Regard both of his Majesty, and his Mind, and Will. But to be sure whosoever is highly concerned to know what such a Writing contains, will, if he can, be very *curious* to peruse it with his *own* Eyes at least, supposing that it is not *unlawful* for him so to do; because there is nothing gives that Satisfaction to a Man's Mind as the Information of his *own* Sense. So that for Men wilfully to neglect reading the *Scripture* which *God* hath so expressly directed to them, and thereby not only licensed but obliged them to read it, argues a very *prophane* Disregard both of the Author of it, and of the Matter it contains; and for any Man, or Society of Men to forbid the *People* to read what *God* hath written and directed to them, is not only to deprive them of a Right which *God* hath given them, but also to acquit them of a Duty which he hath laid upon them For *St. Paul* in those *Epistles* which he wrote to the *Christian People*



ple in general of such and such Churches, still takes it for granted that they would read them; as being not only warranted, but obliged thereunto by his writing them; for so *Ephes. 3. 3, 4.* speaking of that great Mystery of the calling the Gentiles which God had revealed to him, concerning which saith he, *I wrote afore in few words, whereby when ye read ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ.* So also *2 Cor. 1. 13.* *We write no other things unto you, than what you read, that is, than what you may at least, and are obliged to read by vertue of our writing them to you.* And as for his Epistle to the *Thessalonians*, which he wrote to that whole Church, he gives charge that it should be read to all the Holy Brethren, *1 Thes. 5. 27.* So also for that of the *Colossians*, *When this Epistle is, or hath been, read amongst you, cause that it be read also in the Church of the Laodiceans; and that ye likewise read the Epistle from Laodicea.* Where you see he all along either supposes or requires that what he wrote to all should be read by all and to all. If therefore this Authority of *St. Paul* be sufficient to over-rule the Authority of any pretended Successor of *St. Peter*, then it's certain that reading the Scripture is still the Duty of Lay-men notwithstanding any Papal Prohibition to the contrary.

5. From the great Concernment the People have in the Matters contained in Scripture, it is also evident that they are obliged, if they are able, to read it and acquaint themselves with it: For as for the Matters which the Scriptures contain, they are such as are of everlasting Moment to the People as well as to the Clergy. The Articles of Faith which the Scripture proposes are as necessary to be believed by

by the *People* as by the *Clergy*. The Precepts of Life which the *Scripture* prescribes are as *necessary* to be practised by the *People*, as by the *Clergy*. The Promises and Threats with which the *Scripture* enforces those Precepts are as *necessary* to be considered by the *People* as by the *Clergy*: And seeing *both* are equally concerned in the great Matters which the *Scriptures* contain, what Reason can be assigned why *both* should not be obliged to acquaint themselves with them? I know 'tis pretended that it is the proper Office of the *Clergy* to study the *Scriptures* for the *People* as well as for themselves, and that therefore the *People* are obliged to receive the Sense of the *Scriptures* upon Trust from their Teachers without making any farther Enquiry. But I beseech you, are you sure that your Teachers are *infallible*? That they are not so is most certain, it being notorious that most of the prevailing *Heresies* of *Christendom* were first set on broach by the Teachers of the Church, and it is impossible they should be *infallible*, who have so often actually erred even in Matters of the highest Moment. Suppose then what is fairly *supposable*, that your Teachers should mislead you, and not only into dangerous but *damnable* Errors; are you sure that they shall be damned for you, and that you shall escape? If so, then *Heresy* in the *Laity* can never be *damnable* if they receive it upon Trust from their Teachers; and consequently their Souls are as *safe* under the Conduct of *false Teachers* as *true*; provided always that *right* or *wrong* they believe what is taught them. But if your selves must give an Account to God as well for your Faith as for your Manners, and are liable in your own Persons to *eternal* Damnation

( as most certainly you are ) as well for *Heresy* as *Immorality*, then it is the most *unreasonable* Thing in the World that you should in all Things be obliged to believe your *Teachers* upon Trust ; for at this rate a Man may be eternally *damned*, meerly for believing what he is obliged to believe. If it be said that the *People* are not bound to believe what their *particular Pastor* teaches, but what the *Church* teaches them, and the *Church* cannot err though their *particular Pastor* may ; I would fain know how shall the *People* be otherwise informed what the *Church* teaches them than by the *Expositions* of their *particular Pastors*, they being at least as *incapable* of informing themselves what the *Doctrine* of the *Church* is, as what the *Doctrine* of the *Scripture* is ; and therefore if their *Pastor* should err damnably in expounding to them what the *Church* teaches, as it is supposable he may if he be not *infallible*, there is no Remedy but they must err damnably in believing whatsoever their *Pastor* teaches. But we are farther told, that it is *sufficient* for the *People* that they believe in the *gross* that whatsoever the *Church* teaches is *true*, and that as for the *particulars* there is no Necessity that they should be informed about them ; because he who believes that all that the *Church* teaches is *true*, implicitly believes all that is *necessary* ; seeing the *Church* teaches all that is *necessary*. But the mischief of it is that this *compendious Way* of Belief is utterly *insignificant*, and doth no way comport with the Design and Intention of a *Christian's Faith*. For God doth not require our Faith meerly for its own sake, but in order to a farther End, that it may purify our Hearts, and Influence our *Lives* and *Manners* ;

Manners; that is, that the Matters which we believe might by being believed by us affect our Wills, and continually move and persuade us to abstain from all *Ungodliness and Worldly Lusts*, and to live *soberly, righteously, and godly in this present World*; and if our Faith hath not this Effect upon us, St. James assures us that it is a *dead Faith*, and will profit us nothing. But how is it possible that our believing *such and such* Propositions should move and persuade us, if we do not know what those Propositions are, and what is the *true* Sense and Meaning of them? What Man can be persuaded by such Proposals as he doth not understand, and of which he hath no Manner of *explicite* Knowledge? An *Heathen* that believes that whatsoever *God* teaches is *true* doth implicitly believe that *Jesus Christ* came from *God* to reveal his Will to Mankind, because it is certain that *God* teaches this; but what is he the *better* for this his *implicite* Belief? What Influence can it have upon his Heart and Manners, who perhaps never heard of *Jesus Christ*, nor of any *one* Proposition which he revealed to the World? And so he who believes that whatsoever the *Church* teaches is *true*, doth implicitly believe that there shall be a *future Judgment*, a *Resurrection of the Dead*, and an *everlasting State of Happiness or Misery after Death*, because all these Things the *Church* teaches; but if he never hear of them, or hath no *explicite* Knowledge and Belief of them, how is it possible they should operate on his Will and Affections, or ever persuade him to be the *better* Man or the *better Christian*? And the same is to be said of all the *other* Articles of *Christianity*. So that either we must believe to no Purpose,



Purpose, and content our selves with an *insignificant* Faith that will not at all avail us; or take up our Faith upon Trust from *fallible* Teachers who may mislead us into *damnable* Errors, and if they should, we must be *liable* to answer for it in *our* Persons, and at our own *eternal* Peril; or, which is the Truth of the Case, we must be allowed to enquire, and judge for our selves at least in all Things *necessary* to our *eternal* Salvation. Seeing therefore there are many Things in *Scripture* which the *Scripture* it self obliges me upon Pain of Damnation to believe; it hence necessarily follows, that so far forth as the *Scripture* obliges me to believe what it teaches, it obliges me to understand what it teaches, otherwise I must believe I know not what, which is impossible; and so far as the *Scripture* obliges me to understand what it teaches, it must oblige me to *search, enquire, and judge* what it teaches; because I cannot understand without enquiring and judging: But how can I enquire what the *Scripture* teaches if I cannot be admitted to read and consult the *Scripture*? And so again, there are many Duties in *Scripture* which the *Scripture* it self obliges me to practise upon pain of *eternal* Damnation; but how can it oblige me to Practise what it doth not oblige me to Understand; or how can it oblige me to Understand what it doth not oblige me to enquire after? But how can I enquire what it is that the *Scripture* obliges me to Practise, when I am forbid all access to it, and it is lockt up from me in an *unknown* Tongue? In short therefore, seeing the Things contained in *Scripture* are of the *highest* Moment to the *People*, and it is as much as their Souls are worth not to Believe and Practise

Practise what it Teaches; and seeing they can neither Believe nor Practise what they do not understand; it is of *infinite* concern to them so far at least to Read, Consult, and Understand the *Scripture*, as they stand obliged to Believe and Practise its Doctrines and Precepts.

6. And lastly, From the *Universal* Sense of the *Primitive Church* in this matter, it is also evident, that the *People* are obliged to read or acquaint themselves with the *Holy Scripture*. For the *Primitive Church* for above *six hundred* years were so far from debarring the *People* the use of the *Scripture*, that it continually urged and press'd it upon them as a matter of *indispensable* Obligation. For so *Origen* wishes, That all would do as it is written, viz. Search the Scriptures. So also *Clemens Alexandrinus*, Harken ye that are afar off, hearken ye that be near; the Word of God is hid from no man: it is a Light common to all Men, and there is no Darkneſs in it. So also *St. Austin* \*, Think it not sufficient that ye hear the Scriptures in the Church, but do you also read the Scriptures your selves in your own Houses, or get some other to read them to you. So also *St. Jerom* †, The Lord hath spoken to us by his Gospel, not that a few, but all should understand. And elsewhere, speaking of the Women that were at *Bethlehem* with *Paula*, It was not lawful, saith he, for any one of all the Sisters to be ignorant of the *Psalms*, nor to pass over any day without learning some part of the Scriptures. And elsewhere \*, We are taught, saith he, That the Lay-People ought

\* In Orat. adhort.  
ad Gent.

† In Psal. 86.

\* Ep. ad Coloss. c. 3.

to have the Word of God not only sufficiently, but also with abundance, that so they may be able to teach and counsel others. So also St.

† Ep. ad Colos. Hom. 9. Chrysostome †, Hear me O Laity, get ye the Bible the most wholsom remedy for the Soul; and if ye will no more, at least get the New Testament, St. Pauls Epistles, and the Acts, that they may be your continual and earnest Teachers. And elsewhere he

\* In Matth. Hom. 3. affirms \*, That it is more necessary for the Lay-People to read the Scriptures than either for the Monks or Priests, or any others. And to cite no more of the infinite Autho-

\* In Psal. 1. rities of the Fathers to this purpose, St. Basil observes \*, The Scripture of God is like an Apo-

thecarys Shop full of Medicines of sundry sorts, that so every Man may there choose a convenient Remedy for his Disease. And that the People as well as the Priests were then allowed the Use of the Bible, is evident from a notorious matter of Fact; for when the Roman Emperors endeavoured to force the Christians by Persecution and Torments to deliver up their Bibles to be burnt, that so by extinguishing those Sacred Records they might extinguish Christianity, they examined not only the Bishops and Clergy, but also the People of all Degrees and both Sexes; many of whom, as well Women as Men, owned that they had Bibles, but rather chose to die than to deliver them up; and many others, who to avoid Death, delivered up their Bibles, and are therefore branded with the ignominious Name of Traditors, for which they were excluded the Communion of the Church, and could not be readmitted without

without a *long* and *severe* Penance. But it is impossible the *People* could have been *Traditors* if they had had no *Bibles* to deliver up; and therefore being so, is an *undeniable* Argument, that the *People* were then allowed the Use of the *Scripture* as well as the *Priests*. And by the way, it's very *strange* that any Community of *Christians* should think *that* a proper Way to extinguish *Herésie*, which those *Heathen Persecutors* made use of to extinguish *Christianity*. But that in those *first Ages* these *People* were allowed the Use of the *Bible*, is a case so plain, that they who of *later Ages* have thought meet to repeal this Allowance, have never been able to produce so much as one *probable* colour of *Primitive* Authority to warrant their practice. And though in *other* Points they not only claim but ravish *Antiquity*, in despite of Modesty as well as Truth; yet here they are so abandoned of all pretence to it, that they are not able to produce so much as one Passage of any *Primitive Father* that seems to discourage the *People* from Reading the *Scripture*, and much less that forbids them so to do: And 'tis notorious to all the World, That in the *Primitive Ages*, when the *Latin* was the *Vulgar* Language of the *Romans*, the *Bible* was translated into that Language for the Use and Instruction of the *People*; but when through the many IncurSIONS of the *Barbarous Nations* into the *Roman Empire* this Language was worn out by degrees, and instead of being the *vulgar*, became an *unknown* Tongue to that *People*; the *Governours* of that *Church*, having to serve their own secular Ends, introduced into it sundry *corrupt* Doctrines and Practices which they feared the Light of the *Scripture* might

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detect



detect to the *People*, they thought it most *advisable* not to translate it into the *New Vulgar*, but to let it remain lockt up from their Cognizance in the *Old Latin*, which by this Time very few, except the *Clergy*, understood. And when for some Time it had lain hid from them in an *unknown* Tongue, they proceeded at last wholly to forbid the Use of it to the *Laity*. So that about the *Ninth* and *Tenth* Ages, which all argee were over-cast with *gross* Darkness and Ignorance, the *Scriptures* were shut up, like the *Sybilline Oracles* in the *Capitol*, and none but the *Priests* were allowed to Read and Consult them. And though upon the Commencement of the *Reformation*, the *Bible* was for some time set forth again in *sundry vulgar* Languages among the *People*, yet did the *Guides* of that *Church* soon find it *necessary*, for Defence of their own *Unscriptural* Doctrines and Practices, to remit it to its *old* Confinement. For *First*, The *Council of Trent*, in the *Fourth* Rule of their *Index Expurgatorius*, forbids the *Laity* to read, or so much as to have the *Bible* in the *Vulgar* Language, though translated by those of their own *Church*, without a *Licence* in Writing from the *Bishop* of the *Diocess*, or the *Inquisitor*; and this upon Pain of not receiving Absolution of their Sins unless they delivered up those their *Bibles* to their *Ordinary*. To which Rule, *Pope Clement the Eighth* afterwards added Observation, That hitherto by the Command and Practice of the *Holy Roman and Universal Inquisition*, the Faculty of granting such *Licences* for reading or keeping *Bibles* in the *Vulgar* Tongue, or any *Summaries* or *Historical Compendiums* of the said *Bibles*, is taken away; which is to be inviolably observed. And in the

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*Index of Prohibited Books*, published by Pope Alexander the Seventh, not only those Bibles that are translated and printed by Hereticks, but also all Bibles in any *Vulgar Tongue* are absolutely forbidden. And though, where the Reformation hath prevailed, they are forced against their own Laws more freely to indulge the Use of the *Scripture* to their *People*, yet in those Countries where they are sole Masters this Priviledge is very rarely granted.

And now being thus necessitated to deprive the *People* of the Light of the *Scripture*, lest they should thereby discover their Errors and Corruptions, it was necessary for them to invent some plausible Pretences to justify a practice so contrary both to *Scripture* and *Primitive Antiquity*, and so enormously derogatory to the common Right of *Christians*; and when it must be done, it is a very hard Case if Men of Wit and Learning cannot find something to say for any thing. Now the two main Pretences that are urged in this Case are; First, That a general permission of the Use of *Scripture* to the *People* must necessarily open a wide Door to Errors and Heresies: Secondly, That it will prove an unavoidable occasion of great Corruptions in Manners.

1. That a general Permission of the Use of *Scripture* to the *People* must necessarily open a wide Door to Errors and Heresies; because there are many Things in *Scripture* which are hard to be understood, and which the Unlearned, who are unqualified to understand them aright, will be apt to wrest into a wrong Sense to their own Destruction. To which I answer,

1. That this Reason holds as *good* against the writing and publishing the *Scripture* at *first* in Languages that were vulgarly known to the *People*, as against the Translating them now into the *vulgar* Languages. For the *Hebrew*, in which the *Old Testament* was written, was the *vulgar* Language of the *Jews*, and the *Greek* in which the *New Testament* was written, was then the most *vulgar* Language of the *Jews*, and *Gentiles*; and yet notwithstanding there were the same *hard* Things then in the *Scripture* as now, and the *People* were as *unlearned* then, and as apt to wrest these *hard Scriptures* to their own Destruction then as now; yet *God* notwithstanding thought fit to write and publish it in Languages that were most *known* to the *People*; and therefore, either we must say, that he did not take that Care that he ought to have done to prevent *Errors* and *Heresies*, or that this is no *good* Reason why the *People* should be debarred of the *Scripture* in their own *vulgar* Language. For why should not the Writing the *Scriptures* at *first* in the *vulgar* Languages as much open a Door to *Heresie*, as the translating them afterwards, seeing it is neither their being written in the *Vulgar* Language, nor their being translated into the *Vulgar* Language, but their being in the *Vulgar* Language that is here pretended to set open this *dangerous* Door to *Heresies*.

2. This Objection strikes with *equal* force against *God's* writing and publishing the *Scripture* to the *People*, as against their reading and consulting it. For that *God* wrote these *Scriptures* to the *People*, and that in so doing, he not only gave them a Right, but also laid on them an Obligation

ligation to Read them, I have already shewed. If therefore the Reading the *Scripture* by the *People* be such an *unavoidable* Inlet of *Error* and *Heresie*, as this Objection pretends, it was doubtless very unadvisedly done of *God* to publish such a *dangerous* Book to the World; which those for whom he published, and to whom he directed it cannot familiarly converse with without *eminent* Peril of being infected with *Heresie*. And if the *Scripture* be such a *quarrelsome* Knife as these Men say it is, that the *People* can hardly touch it without cutting their Fingers, they are certainly more beholding to the *Church* for taking it from them, than they are to *God* for bestowing it on them.

3. This Objection makes as much at least against the *Priests* Reading the *Scripture* as the *People*. For most of those *Heresies* that have been broacht to the *People* were *first* brewed by the *Priests*, from whose Lips the *People* do commonly derive their *Errors*, as well as their *Knowledge*: Witness those *famous Heresies* with which the *Christian* World hath been so distracted from *one* Generation to *another*, such as the *Novatian*, the *Donatist*, the *Arian*, the *Pelagian*, the *Eutichian*, the *Eunomian*; all which Counterfeits, and a great many more, were *first* coined by the *Clergy*, and dispersed for *current Christianity* among the *Laity*. And therefore, if this Pretence, that the Reading of *Scripture* opens a Gap to *Heresie*, be a *sufficient* Reason why the *Laity* should not Read it, it is a much more *sufficient* Reason why the *Clergy* should not Read it. For it requires Skill and Learning as well to wrest the *Scripture* into such *false* Senses as are likely to impose upon the World, as to inter-



pret it into its *true* Sense; and I am very sure that it ordinarily requires more Wit and Art, to extort from the *Scripture* probable Errors, than it doth to discover by it *necessary* Truth; and if so, then if the danger of letting in *Heresies* is a *true* Reason why any should not Read it, it is much more a *true* Reason why the *Learned* should not Read it than the *Unlearned*; and consequently why the *Priests* should not Read it than the *People*, seeing the *former* are more qualified to extract *Heresies* from it than the *later*. If therefore this Objection signifie any Thing, it must be this, That it is a very *dangerous* thing for any Body to Read the *Bible*; that this same *Divine* Book, which *God* thought fit to publish to the World, and which the *Primitive Church* thought fit to oblige all that were able to Peruse and Study, is now become such a *dangerous* Inlet of *Heresie*, that like *Pandora's Box*, you can no sooner open it, but Swarms of *Errors* and *False Doctrines* will presently fly abroad into the World; so that it would be very well for the World if it were either utterly extinguished, or hid in some *inaccessible* Repository, where no *Mortal* Eye might ever approach it.

4 This Objection expressly contradicts our *Saviour*, and the *Primitive Fathers*. For *Matt.* 22. 29. our *Saviour* tells the *Sadducees*, who were cavilling with him about the Resurrection; *Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures.* Had therefore the *Sadducees* been of the same Mind with our *Objectors* they would doubtless have told him, *by your good Leave Sir, in this Point you your self are in an Error, for in all Probability had we known the Scripture or been intimately acquainted with it, we should have err'd much*

much more. Either therefore our *Saviour* was mistaken in charging the Errour of the *Sadducees* upon their Ignorance of *Scripture*, or our *Objectors* are mistaken in making it so necessary an Expedient for the Prevention of Error to forbid the *People* being acquainted with *Scripture*; for 'tis plain *He* and *They* are of quite Different Opinions in the Case. But whatever their Opinion is, I am sure the *Primitive Fathers* were of the same Opinion with our *Saviour*: For *Irenaus* writing of the *Valentinian Hereticks*,\* *All those*

\* Lib. 3. c. 12.

*Errors they fall into, because they know not the Scriptures.* So St. *Jerom*, † *We must search the Scriptures with all Diligence,*

† In Ep. ad Ephes. l. 3. c. 4.

*that so as being good Exchangers we may know the lawful Coyn from the Copper.* And elsewhere, *That infinite Evils arise from Ignorance of the Scriptures, and that from this Cause the greatest Part of Heresies have proceeded.* St. *Chrysostom* is of Opinion, *that if Men would be conversant with the Scriptures and attend to them, they would not only not fall into Errors themselves, but be able to rescue those that are deceived; and that the Scriptures would instruct Men both in right Opinions, and good Life.* And to name no more, *Theophilact* tells us, *that nothing can deceive them who search the Holy Scriptures; for that saith he is the Candle whereby the Thief is discovered.* But it seems, according to *Modern Experiments*, this Candle of *Scripture* rather serves to light the Thief into the House, than to discover him when he is there; and therefore it is thought necessary for honest Men's security either that it should be wholly extinguished, or at least hinder'd from giving Light by being shut

shut up in a dark Lanthorn of an *Unknown* Tongue. But when they who were once the *honest* Men are become the *Thieves*, it is no wonder that they should thus change their Note, and complain of the Light of this Candle as *dangerous* to them, which *heretofore* they esteemed their *greatest* Security. I am sure the Reason assign'd by St. Peter, why some Men wrested the *Scriptures* to their own Destruction, was not their reading the *Scripture*, but contrary wise their not reading it enough, which they that are *unlearned*, saith he, wrest to their own destruction, 2 Pet. 3. 16. *Unlearned* in what? Why doubtless in the *Holy Scripture*. For as to *humane* Learning, St. Peter himself was as *unlearned* as they; and if it were their being *unlearned* in *Scripture* that occasioned them to wrest it into an *heretical* Sense, then it is not Mens reading the *Scripture* that leads them into *Heresy*, but their not reading it enough. To say therefore that the Peoples reading the *Scripture* is an Inlet of *Heresy*, and to say, no it is not their reading it, but their not reading it enough is the Inlet of *Heresy*, is an express Contradiction; the former our *Objectors* say, the later our *Saviour*, his *Apostles*, and the *Primitive Church* say; and I think it is no hard Matter to determine which of these two Contradictions we ought to believe.

5. And lastly, According to this Objection, the best Way to keep Men from being *Hereticks* is to deprive them of all Means of arriving at the Knowledge of the Truth: And this, I confess, is a very certain Way: though not a very *Honest* one. Let Men know nothing of *Religion*, and to be sure they cannot be *Hereticks*, it being impossible for

for Men to err in their Conceptions of those Things whereof they have no Notion. Put out a Man's Eyes, and you certainly prevent his being imposed upon by *false* Medium's of Sight to mistake *one* Colour or Figure for *another* ; And yet I fancy most Men would think this a *cruel* Kind of Courtesy. But if Men must not be allowed *Scripture* to instruct them in the Truth, for this Reason ; because it may occasionally mislead them into *Errors* and *Heresies*, then they must be allowed no Means of Instruction that may occasion them to err, and consequently no Means at all, there being no *imaginable* Means of Instruction which may not be an Occasion of *Errors* and *Heresies*. Is the *Scripture* it self in its *own* Nature an Occasion of misleading Men into *Heresy*, or not ? If you say it is, consider before you say it, how it could consist with the Truth and Veracity of *God* to publish such a Book to the World as tends in its *own* Nature to seduce and mislead the Understandings of those that read it. If you say it is not *so* in it self, but only that it may be so accidentally, I would fain know what Means of Instruction is there which may not accidentally become an Occasion of misleading Men into *Heresy* ; and therefore if this be a *sufficient* Reason to deprive Men of *Scripture*, it is *sufficient* to deprive them of all *other* Means of Instruction. And seeing the Knowledge of *Religion* is the Food of Mens Souls, to keep them in Ignorance for fear they should err, is to deny them Food for fear they should surfeit. There is no doubt but Men whose Minds are tinged with *Heretical* pravity will be apt enough to extract the Poison of *Error* out of the  
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*clearest* Conveyances and Discoveries of Truth ; but what then ? Do not *bad* Men ordinarily apply the *best* Things to the *worst* purposes ? If Men fall into *Herefy* by reading the *Scripture*, where lies the Fault ? not in the *Scripture* sure, no *Christian* will Pretend that ; and if it be in themselves, in their *Pride*, or *Vain-glory*, or *Covetousness*, or *Sensuality*, ( as it is demonstrable it is ) is it *just* that *All* should be deprived of it, because *some ill* Men have made an *ill* Use of it ? Some Men have surfeited by Eating and Drinking, is it *just* that all Mankind therefore should be deprived of Meat and Drink ? Suppose a Prince, pretending to be an *infallible Geographer*, should issue out a Proclamation commanding all his Subjects to travel at *Midnight*, and should assign *this* as the Reason of it, that he had been certainly informed that *several* of them had lost their Way at *Noon*, and wandred into Bogs and Precipices by the Light of the Sun ; would any *one* imagin *this* to be the *true* Reason, or rather would not every *one* believe that his *true* Design was to keep his People in Ignorance of the Roads and Situation of his Country, that so they might never be able to discover the Errors of his Maps, which would perhaps discover him to be not only a *fallible Geographer*, but also a very *erroneous* one ? And where the *People* are forbid travelling in the Light of the *Scripture*, whatever may be pretended, *wise* Men will believe that the *true* Reason is not to prevent the Peoples falling into *Errors*, but to prevent the discovering the *Errors* of those to whose Guidance and Direction they are wholly and solely subjected. And this I conceive is a *sufficient* Answer to the *first* Objection,

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on, viz. That the Allowance of the *Scripture* to the *People*, is a *dangerous* Inlet of *Error* and *Heresy*. I proceed therefore to the *Second*, which is this;

Object. 2. That there are *many* Things recorded in *Scripture* which are very *apt* to suggest *lewd* Thoughts to the *People*, and thereby to corrupt their Manners, as particularly the many *bad* Examples therein related, which are of a very *contagious* Nature, and consequently *dangerous* for the *People* to converse with. In answer to which I desire these *four* Things may be seriously considered.

1. That this *Objection* strikes as much against the *Scripture* it self as against the *People's* reading it. For what *worse* Thing can be said of the *Scripture* than this, that it is such an *infectious* Book, so *apt* to excite *impure* Thoughts in Mens Minds, and to kindle *lewd* Affections in their Hearts, that it is by no Means fit the *People* should read it? Should this be said to a *Turk*, or a *Heathen*, who had never read *one* Word in the *Bible*, he would certainly conclude it to be nothing but a *Canto of Ribaldries* written for no *other* End but to provoke and entertain the *lascivious* Inclinations of Mankind. And certainly had our *Objectors* but as much Reverence for this *Holy Book* as they pretend, they would rather oblige their *People* to read it than withhold it from them, upon a pretence that doth so scandalously reflect upon its Reputation. If there be any such Passages in *Scripture* as are *apt* to start *lewd* Thoughts in Mens Minds, the utmost that can be fairly pretended, is, That those Passages ought  
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to have been left out of the Peoples Bibles, or at least to have been left *untranslated* : But to urge *this* as a Reason, why all the rest of the *Scripture* should be denied to the *People*, insinuates, as if the *whole* were nothing else but a *meer* Kennel of *contagious* Obscenities. For to urge that for a Reason, why the *Scripture* in *general* should not be read by, or to the *People*, ( which at most is only a Reason why some *few* Passages of it should not be read by them ) is to suppose the whole *Scripture* to be made up of such Passages as are *apt* to infuse *vicious* Thoughts into the *People* ; than which what can there be supposed more *false* in it self, or more *derogatory* to the *Scripture* ?

2. This *Objection*, if it proves any Thing, doth as well prove that it was *unfit* for *God* to publish the *Scripture* to the *People*, as it is for the *People* to read it. For is it fit, that *He, who is a God of purer Eyes than to behold Iniquity*, should publish such Things to the World as are *apt* to engender *impure* Thoughts in Mens Minds ? And yet though Mens Minds were as *apt* to imbibe *impure* Thoughts when these Things were *first* published, as they are now ; this hindred not *God* from publishing them to the World in such Languages as are best *known* and *understood* by the *People*. Either therefore *God* did not so well know what is *apt* to corrupt Mens Minds as our *wise* Objectors ; or he was *less* concerned than they to preserve them from being corrupted ; or what they object is both *false* and *scandalous*. For to say, That the *wise* and *holy* *God* hath published such Things to the World as his Ministers find *necessary* to conceal from the World, lest its Thoughts should be corrupted by them,

them, is in effect to say, that his Ministers are grown *wiser* than he, or are more concerned for the Interest of Holiness than he. If the *Vicious* Examples, for instance, that are recorded in *Scripture* are more *apt* to deprave Men than to instruct them, what need they have been recorded? What is there in the *meer* Story of *Noah's Drunkenness* and *Incest*, and *David's Adultery*, considered abstractly from the *good* Instructions it gives, that should move *God* to deliver it down to all *future* Posterity? If it serve no *good* Ends, it is recorded to a *bad* purpose; and therefore, if for this Reason, because it is *apt* to corrupt Mens Minds, the *Church* be obliged to conceal it now, for the very same Reason *God* was obliged to have concealed it *for ever*. Either therefore we must say that *God* did very *ill* in publishing it, or that the *Church* doth very *ill* in suppressing it; for *God* could have no *other* End in publishing it to the World, but only to instruct the World by it. If therefore it be not *instructive*, *God* was mistaken; but if it be, it is *fit* the World should be acquainted with it.

3. That this *Objection* doth expressly contradict the *Scripture* it self; For whereas it tells us, that the *bad* Examples recorded in *Scripture* would be apt to deprave the Peoples Minds and Manners, *St. Paul* tells us the quite contrary: *These Things were our Examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they, i. e. the Israelites in the Wilderness, lusted. Neither be ye Idolaters, as were some of them: Neither let us commit fornication as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand: Neither let us tempt Christ, as some*  
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of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents: Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer: Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples; and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come, 1 Cor. 10. 6, 7, 8. 9, 10, 11. Whereas this *Objection* urges that there are sundry Passages in *Scripture* which should the *People* read, would excite evil Thoughts in their Minds; The same *St. Paul* tells us, That all *Scripture* is profitable, not only for *Doctrine* and *Reproof*, but also for *correction*, for instruction in righteousness, 2 Tim. 3. 16. Whereas this *Objection* pretends, that it would be very unsafe for young *People* especially, to be allowed the *Scripture*, because there are several amorous Stories and Passages in it which will be apt to suggest wanton Thoughts to their gay and amorous Fancies. *David*, it is plain, was of a quite contrary Mind; for wherewith faith he, shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word, Psal. 119. 9. than which two Passages what Assertions can be more contrary one to another.

4. And lastly, That supposing this *Objection* to be thus far true, that there are some Passages in *Scripture* which may sometimes occasionally excite bad Thoughts in Mens Minds, yet this is no just Reason why the Use of *Scripture* should be forbid to the *People*. For every Thing which the *People* occasionally make bad Uses of, is for that Reason to be forbid to them; even *Prayer* and the *Sacraments*, and the *Profession* of *Christianity* ought to be forbidden them as well as the *Scripture*, seeing of the one as well as of the other, many *People* do occasionally

onally make very *bad* Uses. So long as the *Scripture* is *good* in it self, and *apt* in its *own* Nature to instruct and edifie those that read it, this is *sufficient* not only to warrant the Peoples Use of it, but to enjoin and require it; and if it sometimes occasion *corrupt* Thoughts in *corrupt* Minds, this is no more a Reason why the *People* should be deprived of the Light of it than some *bad* Mens making ill Use of the Light of the Sun is, why the Sun should be extinguished, or why the *People* should be *for ever* shut up from the Light of it in *dark* and *dismal* Dungeons. But as for those very Passages in *Scripture*, which do sometimes occasion *ill* Thoughts in Mens Minds, they are so far from doing it of their *own* Natures, that as they are delivered in *Scripture*, there is nothing more naturally *apt* to repress *bad* Thoughts, and to arm and fortifie Mens Minds against them. As for instance, The *bad* Examples recorded in *Scripture* are generally delivered with *infamous* Characters, *severe* Prohibitions, and *dreadful* Instances of God's Vengeance attending them, which render them much more *apt* to repress than to excite *evil* Thoughts in Mens Minds; to quicken them to *Prayer* and *Watchfulness* against Temptations, and when at any Time they have been overcome by them, to encourage them to Repentance; or when they have overcome them, to stir them up to a *grateful* Acknowledgment of that *preventing* and *assisting* Grace of God, by which they have been enabled to resist and repel them. These are the *natural* Uses of those *bad* Examples recorded in *Scripture*; and therefore, if instead of making these Uses of them, some Men pervert them to *bad* Purposes,

that is *their* Faults and not the *Scriptures*. It is *sufficient* that the *bad* Examples in *Scripture*, as they are there recorded, are in themselves of *excellent* Use to the *People*; but should Men be deprived of the Use of every *good* Thing they abuse, I would fain know what one *good* Thing would be left free to their Enjoyment. And now having proved at large the Peoples Right and Obligation to Use and Search the *Holy Scripture*, and answered the *main Objections* against it; I shall conclude with these two Inferences from the whole.

1. If the *People* are obliged to acquaint themselves with *Scripture*, then they are obliged to receive upon the Authority of *Scripture* those *Divine* Truths which it proposes to their Belief. For to what *other* end should we be obliged to read and consult the *Word of God*, but only that we may learn from it what is his Mind and Will? but how should we learn from *Scripture* what God's Mind is, if we are not to believe what he therein declares upon *Scripture* Authority? If I must not believe when I read the *Scripture* that this is God's Mind, because the *Scripture* says so, it is *impossible* I should ever learn God's Mind by reading it; and consequently I am obliged to read it to *no* Purpose: For there is nothing can teach me what God's Mind is, but that which gives me *sufficient* Ground to believe that what it teaches is the Mind of *God*. When therefore I read the *Scripture*, and find such a Proposition plainly asserted in it, is this a *sufficient* Ground or no for me to believe it to be the Mind of *God*? If it be, then the Authority of *Scripture* is a *sufficient* Ground for my Belief; If it be

be not, then the *Scripture* cannot teach me what God's Mind is; because it cannot give me *sufficient* Ground to believe any *one* Proposition in it to be the Mind of God. We are told indeed, that we are not to receive the Sense of the *Scripture* from the *Scripture*, but from the *Church*, who alone hath Authority to Expound it to us, and whose Expositions in all Matters of Faith are *infallible*. But if this be so, to what end should we read the *Scripture*, seeing the only End of Reading is to learn the Sense of what we read, which according to this Principle is not to be learnt from *Scripture*? So that though there be no other *wise* End of reading the *Scripture*, but only to learn from it what it means, yet it seems for Men to read it for this End is a *perfect* Labour in Vain; seeing it is not from the *Scripture* but from the *Church* that they are to learn the Meaning of *Scripture*. For as for the *Scripture*, if these Men are to be believed, it is nothing but a heap of *unsensed Characters*; so they expressly term it: But what do they mean by it? Is it that the *Scripture* consists of a company of Letters, and Syllables, and Words, that carry with them no *determinate* Sense, that God Almighty hath written and published a Book to the World that means nothing? If so, then when the *Church* by its *infallible* Authority pretends to expound the *Scripture*, Her meaning is not to expound the Sense of it, but to impose a Sense on it which was never in it; for how can She expound the Sense of a Book which hath no Sense in it? If the *Church* is to expound the Sense of *Scripture*, the *Scripture* must have a *certain determinate* Sense in it before She expounds it; for to expound the Sense of *That* which



hath no Sense, is Nonsense: And if the *Scripture* hath a *certain* Sense in it antecedently to the *Church's* Exposition of it, why do they call it a parcel of *Unsensed Characters*? If their Meaning be only this, that the Sense of *Scripture* as it is delivered in *Scripture*, is so *obscure* and *ambiguous*, that without the *infallible* Exposition of the *Church*, we can never be *certain* what it is; besides, that this is notoriously *false*, the *Scripture* in all *necessary* Points both of Faith and Manners, being so very *plain* and *clear*, that any Man that reads it with an *unprejudiced* Mind, may be as *certain* of the Sense of it, as he can be of the Sense of any Writing, and consequently of the Sense of any *written* Exposition of the *Church*; besides this, I say, it is *evident*, that whatever these Men pretend, it is not meerly because of the *obscurity* of *Scripture* that they oblige Men to ground their Faith upon the *Church*, and not upon the *Scripture*. For they own as well as we, that in many Things the *Scripture* is very *plain* and *clear*, and yet they will by no Means allow Men to ground their Belief of these things upon the Authority of *Scripture*, but all must be resolved into the Authority of the *Church*. By which it is evident, That if all the *Scripture* were as *plain*, as the *plainest* Scriptures, they would still contend for the Necessity of Mens relying upon the *Church*, and not upon the *Scripture*; and consequently that the *true* Reason why they contend for it, is not because the *Scripture* is *obscure*, but because they are resolved to advance their *Church's* Authority. We own as well as they, that where the *Scripture* is *obscure*, Men ought to be guided by the Authority of the *Church*, which we freely allow to be the  
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best Expositor of *Scripture*. But the true State of the Difference between *them* and *us*, is this; That whereas we require plain Men to judge of plain Things with their own Understandings, and all Men so far forth as they are capable, to judge for themselves in Matters of Religion, and not content themselves to see with the Church's Eyes, where they are able to see with their own; nothing will satisfy these Men, but to have all Men, as well Wise as Simple, surrender up their Faith and Judgment to the Church, and wink hard, and believe what-ever the Church believes, purely because the Church belieyes it. Whatever they pretend therefore, the Truth of the Case is this; They will by no means allow us to believe upon the Authority of *Scripture*; not because the *Scripture* is obscure, (though this they pretend, for were it never so plain the Case would be the same) but because they are sensible that this will inevitably subvert their usurped Dominion over the Faith and Consciences of Men. But we must believe upon the Authority of the Church; and who is this Church I beseech you? Why they themselves are this Church. So that whereas God hath published a Book called the Bible, on purpose to declare his Mind and Will to the World, here are started up a Sort of Men that call themselves the Church, who very gravely tell us; *Sirs, You must not so much as look into this Book, or if you do, must not believe any one Word in it upon its own Credit and Authority.* For though we do confess it is the Word of God, yet we are the sole Judges of the Sense of it; and therefore whatsoever we declare is its Sense, how unlikely soever it may seem to you, you are bound in Conscience to receive and believe it for this very Reason, be-

cause we declare it. In short, you must resign up your Eyes, your Faith, your Reason, and Understandings to us, and see only with our Eyes, and believe only with our Faith, and judge only with our Judgment; and whithersoever we shall think fit to lead you, you must tamely follow us without presuming to examin whether we lead you right or wrong. But yet after all to induce us thus to inslave our Understandings to them they themselves are fain to appeal to *Scripture*, and allow us in some Things to judge of the Sense of it, and to believe those Things upon its Authority. For no wise and honest Man will ever believe either that They are the Church, or the infallible Judges of the Sense of *Scripture* without some Proof and Evidence; and for this this they are fain to produce several Texts of *Scripture*, such as, *Thou art Peter, and upon this Rock will I build my Church.* Now supposing that to be true, which is notoriously false, viz. that those Texts do necessarily imply that They are the only true Catholick Church, and that as such they are constituted by God infallible Judges of *Scripture*; yet before I can believe so, I must judge for my self whether this be the Sense of them or no; and if I judge it is, I must believe that they are the Church, and infallible upon the *Scripture's* Authority and not theirs; for their Authority is the Thing in debate, and I cannot believe upon it before I believe it. So then, though we must believe nothing else upon *Scripture* Authority, yet upon this very Authority we must believe that they are the Church, and that they are infallible, which are the fundamental Principles of their Religion; that is to say, we must believe as much upon *Scripture* Authority as will serve their turn,



turn, and no more. But may I be *certain* of the Truth of these *two Fundamental Principles* upon *Scripture* Authority, or no? If I may, why may I not as well be infallibly *certain* upon the same Authority of *other Principles* of *Christianity* as well as those, seeing there are no *common Principles* of *Christian Religion* but what are at least as plainly revealed in *Scripture* as these. But this will spoil all; for if Men may be infallibly *certain* of the Principles of *Religion* upon *Scripture* Authority, what will become of the Necessity of Mens relying upon the *Church*, which is founded upon this Principle that Men can arrive at no *infallible* Certainty in *Religion* by relying upon the Authority of *Scripture*, or indeed any *other* Authority but the *Church's*? But if I cannot be infallibly *certain* of those *two Principles*, *viz.* that they are the *Church*, and *Infallible*, by those Authorities of *Scripture* which they urge to prove them, how can I be infallibly *certain* of any Thing that they declare and define? For if I am not *certain* that they are the *Church*, for all I know the *Church*, may be *infallible*, and yet they may be mistaken; and if I am not *certain* that they are *infallible*, for all I know they may be the *Church*, and yet still be mistaken. In short, no Authority can render me infallibly *certain*, but that which is *infallible*; no *Infallibility* can render me infallibly *certain*, but that of which I have an *infallible* Certainty. Either therefore the *Scripture* can render me infallibly *certain* of the *Infallibility* of their *Church* (and if it cannot, I am sure nothing can) or it cannot; if it can, why may it not as well render me infallibly *certain* of *other Principles* of *Christianity* which are at least as plainly reveal-



ed in it as that? If I cannot, how can I be infallibly *certain* that any Thing she defines and declares to me is true? If then the Authority of *Scripture* can give us an *infallible* Certainty, we have as *just* a Pretence to it as They, it being upon this Authority that we ground our Faith; if it cannot, neither they nor we can justly pretend to it; because they cannot otherwise be infallibly *certain* of their own *Infallibility* but by *Scripture*. But the Truth of it is, *God* never intended either that *they* or *we* should be infallibly *certain* in the Matters of our *Religion*; for after all the Means of Certainty that he hath given us he still supposes that we may err, and plainly tells us that there must be *Heresies*, and that even from among the Members of the *true Church*, where *infallible* Certainty is (if it be any where) there should arise *false Teachers* who should bring in *dammable* Doctrines; which could never have happened if he had left any such Means to his *Church* as should render her Children infallibly *certain*. All that he designed was to leave us such *sufficient* Means of Certainty in *Religion*, as that we might not err either dangerously or damnably without *our own* Fault. He hath left us his Word, and in that hath plainly discovered to us all that is *necessary* for us to believe in order to *eternal* Life. He hath left us a *standing* Ministry in his *Church* to explain his *Word* to us, and to guide us in the Paths of Righteousness and Truth; but still he requires us to search the *one*, and attend to the *other* with *honest*, *humble*, and *teachable* Minds; and if we do not, we may err not only dangerously but damnably, and it is but *fit* and *just* we should. But if we diligently search the *Scripture*, and faithfully rely upon its Authority, without doing of which

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we search it in vain ; if we sincerely attend to the *publick* Ministry, with Minds prepared to receive the Truth in the Love of it ; though we may possibly err in Matters of *less* Moment, yet as to all Things *necessary* to our *eternal* Salvation our Faith shall be inviolably secured ; and this is as much as any *honest* Man needs, or as any *honest* Church can promise.

2. From hence also I infer that in the Matters of our Faith and *Religion*, God doth expect that we should make use of *our own* Reason and Judgment. For to what end should he put us upon searching the *Scriptures*, but that thereby we may inform our selves what those Things are which he hath required us to believe and practise ? But if it were his Mind that we should wholly rely upon the Authority of our *Church*, or of our *Spiritual Guides*, and submit our Faith to their Dictates without any Examination, what a *needless* and *impertinent* Employment would this be for us, to search and consult the *Scriptures* ? Consult them, for what, if we are not to follow their Guidance and Direction, and to take the Measures of our Faith and Manners from them ? And if for this End God hath obliged us to consult them ( as to be sure it can be for no *other* End ) then he hath obliged us to imploy *our own* Reason and Judgment, to consider what they say, and enquire what they mean ; otherwise he hath obliged us to consult them to no Purpose. It is as evident therefore that God will have us use *our own* Reason and Judgment in discerning what we are to believe, and what not, in *Religion*, and not *lazily* rely upon *others* to see and discern, and believe for us, as it is that he would have us search and  
consult

consult the *Scriptures* ; and that I think is evident enough, from what hath been said, to any one that is not resolved to admit of a Conviction. And indeed seeing our Reason is the *noblest* Faculty we have, it would be very strange if *God* should not allow it to intermeddle in the *highest* and most *important* Affair wherein he hath ingaged us ; and seeing it is our Reason only that renders us *capable* of *Religion*, what an *odd* Thing would it be for *God* to forbid us making use of our Reason in the most *important* Concerns of *Religion*, that is, in distinguishing what is *true Religion* from what is *false*, and what we ought to believe from what we ought to reject ? I know it is pretended by those who urge the *absolute* Necessity of submitting our Reason to the *Church*, that they allow Men to make Use of their *own* Reason and Judgment in discovering which the *true Church* is, and that all they contend for is only this, that when once Men have found the *true Church* they ought to enquire no farther, but immediately to deliver up their Reason and Understanding to it, and believe every Thing it believes without any farther Examination. So that before Men come into their *Church*, it seems they are allowed to see for themselves, but after they are *in*, they must wink and follow their Guides, and depute them to see and understand for them ; which to such Men as are not quite *sick* of their *own* Reason and Understandings should methinks be a *great* Temptation to keep them out of their *Church* for ever : For if I may judge for my self while I am *out* of it, but must not while I am *in* it, I must be very *fond* of parting with my *own* Eyes and Reason if ever I come *into* it at all. But  
suppose

suppose I was always in it, and had been bred up in its Communion from my Infancy, will they allow me when I come to the full use of my Reason fairly to question whether theirs be the only true Church or no, and to hear the Reasons, and examine the Scriptures, and consult the Doctors on both sides? No, by no means; this I am forbid under the penalty of being deprived of the Benefit of Priestly Absolution. So that in short they will allow me to make Use of my Reason if I have been bred an Heretick in order to my Reconciliation to their Church, but if I have never been an Heretick I must never use my Reason to examine the Truth either of my Church or Religion; that is to say, I may use my Reason when there is no other Remedy, and I must continue a Heretick if I do not: But it were much better that I had never had Occasion to use my Reason at all. So that according to these Men the Use of our Reason in Religion is only the least of two Evils; it is not so bad as to continue a Heretick, but if I had never been one it would be very bad, and a certain Way to make me one; which methinks looks very odd, that the Use of my Reason should be necessary to reduce me from Heresy, and the disuse of it as necessary, when I am reduced, to preserve me from relapsing into Heresy. 'Tis a memorable Passage of the Bishop of St. Mark in the Council of Trent, that Seculars are obliged humbly to obey that Doctrine of Faith which is given them by the Church, without disputing or thinking farther of it. Where by the Church he means the Clergy assembled in that Council. So that according to this Man's Doctrine the Faith of the People is a meer Beast of Burthen, that right or wrong must bear



bear all the Load that the *Priests* shall agree to lay upon it ; and though it should feel it self *oppressed* by them with never such *gross* Contradictions or Absurdities, it must think no farther of it, but tamely trudge on without starting or bogling. At this Rate what Tricks may not the *Priests* play with the Faith of the *People* ? Let them invent what Doctrines they please to serve the Interest of their *own* Ambition and Covetousness, the *People* must believe them without asking *why* ; or if they should ask *why*, they must expect no other Answer but this, because we have thought to define and declare them. For it is by no means *allowable* that the *People* should exercise any *private* Judgment of their *own*, about Matters of Faith ; no, I confess it is not, where the Matters proposed to their Faith are *false* and *erroneous* ; because it is a *thousand* to one but *one* time or *other* the *People* will discover the Frauds and Impostures of the *Priests*, and this would spoil all. But if the Matters of Faith are *true*, in all Probability the farther the *People* enquire into them the better they will be satisfied about them ; and if in the Exercise of their *private* Judgments they should in some *particulars* err, that is far more *tollerable* than that they should be utterly deprived of the Means of being able to give an Answer to every one that asks them a Reason of the Hope that is in them. But when God hath given the *People* *reasonable* Faculties on purpose that by them they may be able to distinguish what is *true* from what is *false*, for any Party of Men to forbid them the Use of these Faculties in distinguishing what is *true* from what is *false* in Religion, in which above all Things they are

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*Peoples Obligation to read the Scriptures.* 383

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are most highly concerned, it is a most *injurious* Usurpation upon the *common* Rights of *humane* Nature. For by this Means our *best* Faculty is rendred *useless* to us in our *greatest* Concerns; and whereas *God* gave it to us on purpose to guide and direct us, we are utterly deprived of it's Guidance where we have most need of it, and where it will prove most *fatal* to us if we should happen to err and go astray.

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# DISSUASIVE FROM APOSTACY.

I TIMOTHY I. 19.

*Holding faith, and a good conscience; which  
some having put away, concerning faith have  
made shipwrack.*

**T**Hese Words are a part of St. Paul's Charge to his Son *Timothy*, wherein he Pathetically Exhorts him as a *Valiant Bishop*, to take all possible Care to preserve the Purity of the *Christian Doctrine* in his Diocese of *Ephesus*, which at that time abounded with *false Teachers*, whose Business it was to sow the Tares of Heresie and *false Doctrine* in that large and fruitful Field, the Cultivation whereof St. Paul had committed to his Charge. And that he might discharge this Office the more effectually, the *Apostle* warns him in the first Place to take Care of himself, that he did not suffer his own Faith and Manners to be depraved and corrupted by those lewd and irreligious Principles

Principles which those *Antichristian* Seminaries were then scattering among his People ; that so he might be an Example to his Flock, as well as a Teacher of *pure and undefiled Religion*. And this, *v. 18.* he presses upon him from the Consideration of what had been foretold of him by *Divine Inspiration*, before ever he entered upon his Ministry ; *viz.* That he should war a good warfare, that is, prove a *constant and courageous* Champion of the *Christian Faith* ; which Prophecies, he exhorts him to use his *utmost* endeavour to verifie both in his Profession and Practice, by holding, or as it is in the Original, *ἔχων*, having, or keeping faith and a good conscience ; which later, *viz.* a good conscience, *some* having put away, concerning the former, *viz.* Faith, have made shipwrack.

Before we proceed to the Design of these Words, it will be *necessary* briefly to explain some Terms in them ; as,

1. What is meant by *Faith*.
2. What by a *good Conscience*.
3. What by putting away a *good Conscience*: And
4. What by making *shipwrack* of the *Faith*.

1. As for the *first*, What is here meant by *keeping the Faith* ? I answer, By this Phrase *Faith*, we are to understand the *Christian Creed*, or summary of those *necessary and essential* Doctrines whereof the *Christian Religion* is composed : For at that time there was *little* else professed and taught in the *Christian Churches*, but only the *fundamental* Principles of *Christianity*, together with the *nearest*



*est.* and most *immediate* Inferences from them; so that few then mis-believed but such as mis-believed in *Fundamentals*, and every Error in Doctrine was generally a Heresie. The *Christian* Faith in those Days lay within a *narrow* compass, and so it continued till the Wantonness and Curiosity of *succeeding* Ages started *disputable* Opinions, and as they prevailed, *adopted* them into the Family of Faith; insomuch, that in process of Time, *sundry* Opinions were received, that were never so much as heard of, in the *Apostolical* Age; and as soon as they were received, they were presently declared necessary Articles. And as for the *contradictory* Opinions, though *Christianity* was little or nothing concerned whether they were *true* or *false*; yet they seldom underwent any *milder* Name than *Heresie*, or *gentler* Doom than Damnation; which hath been one of the *grand* Occasions of all the Ruptures and Divisions that have happened in the *Christian* World. But as for the Faith which the *Apostle* here speaks of, it was of a much *less* Bulk than what it is now arrived to by rolling through the *wild* Opiniatry of *Sixteen* Disputation Ages, which by degrees have swelled it from a *short* script into a *large* Volume. For if we look into the *New Testament*, and into the Writings of the most *Primitive* Fathers, we shall find the Sums of *Christian* Faith therein contained, consisting of very few Articles, and those such only as are *essential* to *Christian* Religion, and such as wherein almost all the *differing* Persuasions of *Christians* do to this Day concenter. To hold the Faith therefore is to persevere immovably in the Profession of the *true* *Christian* Doctrine, so far as in us lies, and not to be

be prevailed upon to desert or forsake it, either through *Fear* of Persecution, or *Hope* of Temporal Advantage, or the *Knaveish* Arts and *Sly* Insinuations of *false* Teachers.

2. The *second* Term here to be explained, is, What is meant by keeping a *good Conscience*? Conscience in general is nothing but our *practical* Judgment directing us what we ought to *do*, and what to *avoid*, and *approving* or *reproving*, according as we follow its Directions, or run counter to them. The Conscience therefore is *good* or *bad*, according as the Directions are which it gives for the Government of our Lives and Actions. If our Judgment be *false* and *erroneous*, and directs us to *do* what we ought to *avoid*, or to *avoid* what we ought to *do*, it is a *bad* Conscience, that instead of being a Light to guide our Steps in the Paths of Righteousness, is only a *wandering Night-fire* that leads us into Bogs and Quagmires. As on the contrary, A *good* Conscience is our *practical* Judgment well informed, and truly directing us in the Course of our Actions what we ought to *do*, and what to *avoid*: For a *good* Conscience is the *true* Eccho of *God* within us, that faithfully resounds his Voice, and upon all Opportunities of Action, repeats after him to our Wills and Affections. To keep a *good* Conscience therefore implies *two* Things: *First*, To maintain in our Minds a *true* Sense of *Good* and *Evil*, and so far forth as in us lies, to preserve our *practical* Judgment *pure* from all *false* Principles of Action, and not to suffer either our *vicious* Inclinations or *worldly* Interest to warp and seduce it, and cause it to mistake *Evil* for *Good*, and *Good* for *Evil*. *Secondly*, It implies

our following the Dictates and Directions of a *good* Conscience, our doing what it *bids*, and abstaining from what it *forbids*, and faithfully resigning our selves to its Conduct and Government, and not to be prevailed upon by any Temptation whatsoever to act counter to its Sense and Persuasion. In short, To keep a *good Conscience* is to live in a *strict* Conformity to the Dictates of a *well-informed* Judgment, and not to allow our selves in any Course of Action which this Vice-God within us forbids or disapproves.

3. The *Third* Term to be explained in the Text, is, What is meant by *putting away a good Conscience*; which being directly opposed here to keeping a *good Conscience*, must denote the Contraries to it. To put away a *good Conscience* therefore is either, *first*, to corrupt *our own* Judgment of Things and Actions out of *vicious* Affection or *worldly* Interest, and impose upon our selves *false* Notions of *Good* and *Evil*; or, *secondly*, to act directly contrary to our Sense and Persuasion; to leave *undone* those Things which *our own* Conscience tells us we ought to *do*, and to *do* those Things which it tells us we ought not to *do*. In short, to put away a *good Conscience* is to live in any *known* Course of Sin, either of *Omission* or *Commission*; to practise Contradictions to *our own* Judgments, and to follow the Inclinations of our Wills against the Light and Conviction of our Consciences.

4. The *last* Enquiry, is, What is here meant by making *shipwreck of the Faith*? which being here set in Opposition to *holding* or *keeping the Faith*, must signify oppositely, and consequently must denote not holding and keeping it; or which is the same

same thing, losing and abandoning it : For in this *Allegory*, the *true Christian Faith* is represented as a Ship, and a *good Conscience*, or a *pure and holy Life* as the Pilot, that steers and governs it. And indeed, in that State of Things there was no *other* Pilot, but Purity of Conscience and Holiness of Life was able to conduct and preserve this Ship, and carry it *safe* through those *incessant* Storms of Persecution, wherein at that time it was toss'd and agitated. For when *Christians* have once thrown off the Obligations of a *good Conscience*, by abandoning themselves to a *wicked and dissolute Life*, what is there left to restrain them from abandoning their Faith when it stands in Competition with their Worldly Ease and Interest? And though there should be no Competition between their Faith and Interest, but they might freely enjoy them both without any disturbance ; yet their *wicked Lives* will naturally tempt them to corrupt their Faith with *wicked Principles* ; of which *later* in the next Verse, he gives an *eminent* instance in *Hymenæus*, who had not wholly deserted *Christianity*, but only renounced *one Fundamental Article* of it, *viz.* The Resurrection of the Dead : As of the *former*, he gives *another Instance* in *Alexander*, who as it seems probable, had through the Fear of Persecution deserted *Christianity* it self.

The Words thus explained may be resolved into this Sense, *That Mens living wickedly against the Convictions and Obligations of their Conscience, doth very much expose them to Apostacy from true Religion into gross and impious Errors.* Thus to the love of money, which is the root of all evil, the Apostle attributes Mens Erring from the Faith, 1 Tim. 6. 10.



And that which exposed those *silly women*, 2 Tim. 3. 6. to the Seduction of *false Teachers*, was their being *laden with sins*, and *led away with divers lusts*. And the same *Apostle* ascribes *Demas's Apostacy* to his *Covetousness*, or *inordinate love of this present World*, 2 Tim. 4. 10. But that I may evince this Truth more fully, I shall give you some *particular Instances of the mighty Tendencies* there are in every *vicious Course of Life* to *Error and Apostacy from true Religion*.

1. It *corrupts and debauches* Men's Reason and Understanding.

2. It renders the Principles of *true Religion uneasy* to ther Minds.

3. It deprives Men of the *highest Encouragements* to Constancy and Stedfastness in *Religion*.

4. It weakens the *natural Force* of their Consciences, which is the *greatest Restraint* from *Apostacy*.

5. It strengthens the Temptations to *Apostacy*.

6. It provokes *God* to give us up to the Power of Delusion.

1. Living in any *known and willful Course* of Sin, corrupts and debauches Men's Reason and Understandings. So long as a Man lives in any *known Sin* he doth not only live without, but against his Reason, which instead of being the Guide of his Actions, hath nothing at all to do with them, but like an *idle Spectator*, doth only behold the *brutish Scene* without any Part or Concern in it. And whilst a Man thus abandons himself to the Government of his own *blind Will*, and lives not only in the *perpetual Neglect*, but Contempt of his Reason, it is impossible for him not to waste and impair it. For  
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as our *rational* Faculties are improved and perfected by Exercise, so they naturally languish and decay, through Disuse and Inactivity; and consequently the *less* Use we make of them in the Government of our Lives and Actions, which is their *proper* Office and Employment, like *standing* Waters they must corrupt and putrifie. And indeed there is no *impure* Lust but doth by its own *natural* Efficacy disable Mens Reason and Understanding: For while we are in these Bodies, our Mind is fain to work by *bodily* Instruments, and to make Use of *Brains*, and *Blood*, and *Spirits*, in all its Operations; and according as their Temper is *good* or *bad*, its Operations will be *more* or *less* perfect: But while a Man indulges himself in any *impure* Affection, that will naturally distemper these Organs of his Mind, and indispose them for the Use of his Reason. For so Madness, which is such a Distemperature of the *Brain*, and *Blood*, and *Spirits* as doth wholly alienate them from the Use of Reason and Discourse, is usually found to be the Effect of some *wild* and *extravagant* Affection, such as *Pride*, or *Covetousness*, *Anger*, or *Fearfulness*, *Jealousie*, or *Lust*; and if these Passions, being once arrived to their *utmost* Rage and Excess, do so often run into *down-right* Madness and Distraction, to be sure every *inordinate* Degree of them must be a Tendency towards it, a *great* Disturbance of Mind, though not a *total* Distraction; and how much they exceed their *due* Bounds and Measures, by so much they must taint and vitiate these *necessary* Instruments of our Mind and Reason. Thus every *inordinate* Lust doth by a *natural* Influence disturb Mens Reason, and sully the clearness of their *discerning* Faculties. So that

what *Clearness* is to the Eye of the Body, that *Purity* from *vicious* Affection is to the Eye of the Mind; it brightens its Apprehensions, and renders its Conceptions of Things more *quick, distinct,* and *vigorous*: Whereas on the contrary, all *disorderly* Affection doth *more or less* cloud and disturb the Brain, chill or inflame the Spirits, hurry them into *tumultuous* Motions, or render them *listless* and *unactive*; by which *continual* Disorders, our *discerning* Faculties must by Degrees be extremely weakened and confounded. And whilst the Mind is thus *lost* in the Fogs of *inordinate* Affection, it is an *easy* Matter to seduce and mislead it, it being through the Dimness of its sight apt to be imposed upon by *false* Colours, and tingured with Prejudice and *undue* Apprehensions of Things. *Weak* Minds are easily abused, especially in Matters of *Religion*, which being placed beyond the Prospect of Sense, require a *severer* Attention in order to the forming of *right* Apprehensions concerning them; and therefore the *more* Men weaken their Understandings by their Lusts, the *more* they must be exposed to Errors and Delusions. But then,

2. Living in any *known* Course of Sin, renders the Principles of *true Religion* uneasy to Mens Minds. Whilst a Man leads a *wicked* Life, his *Religious* Principles, if they are *pure* and *true*, will perpetually reproach and upbraid him: For there are no Contraries in Nature more *irreconcilable* to one another than *true* Faith and *bad* Manners; the *great* Design of all *true* Faith being to move and persuade Men to abstain from all Ungodliness, and to live *soberly, righteously, and godly* in this present World. If therefore a Man's Faith be *true* and *genuine*,

*mine*, he cannot live wickedly without acting against the *full* Persuasion of his *own* Mind, which must necessarily render him very *uneasie*; for in this State of Things he acts with a *self-condemning* Judgment, and every Compliance with his Inclination sets him at odds with his Reason; all the while he is meditating any *wicked* Design, he struggles with his Conscience, and confronts and outrages his *own* Convictions; and when he hath acted it, every Reflection he makes on it is a *bitter* Invective against himself: Thus so long as the Principles of *true Religion* possess his Mind, he finds himself continually hagg'd and oppressed by them; they sit as an *uneasie* Load upon his Soul, and will not suffer him to Sin in quiet, but perpetually cause his *sinful* Delights to go off with an *ungrateful* Farewel, and recoil upon him in many a *sickly* Qualm and Convulsion. In which State of Things he hath no *other* Remedy, but either to forsake his Principles, or his Lusts; or to live in *perpetual* Variance with himself; and therefore, if he still resolve to Sin on, in all probability he will soon grow quite weary of *true Religion*, and quit his Mind as soon as possibly he can of those *stern* and *inflexible* Principles which create these Discords in his Breast. And whilst he is in this Temper it will be an *easy* matter to pervert him to any *Religion* that will give Ease to his *straitlaced* Conscience, and cast a more *favourable* Aspect on his Lust: for being resolved to follow his *vicious* Inclinations he now sees through them, and understands by them; and whilst his Mind runs upon the *false* Bias of his Lusts, that *Religion* which is most *grateful* to them will seem most *reasonable* to him. Shew him a way



how he may worship *God* acceptably without the Expence of a *strict* Attention, and the *inward* Devotion of a *pure* Heart, and *heavenly* Affections; meerly by numbring so many Prayers on a String of Beads, by seeing a Priest act over such a Set of Ceremonies, and hearing him in *varied* Tones sometimes pronounce, and sometimes murmur a *Form of Words* in an *Unknown Language*; and though at first view it may seem very *absurd* to him, yet the very Loofness and Carnality will be apt to engage his Affections to it, and then they by degrees will go near to wheedle his Understanding into a more *favourable* Opinion of it. Propose to him an Expedient how he may go to *heaven* at last without undergoing the Severities of a *sincere* Repentance and Amendment; tell him there is a *certain Church* in the World whose Priests, if he confess his Sins to them with any Degree of Sorrow and Remorse, have *full* Power to Pardon and Absolve him; so that if he do but take Care not to die without Confession, however he lives he cannot miscarry for ever. He may indeed go into a very *hot* Place called *Purgatory*, and there suffer a while very *grievous* Things before he get to *Heaven*; but if instead of parting with his Lusts while he lives, he will part with his Mony when he dies, he may at *easy* Rates purchase of that *Church* such a Number of *Masses*, *Requiems*, and *Indulgencies*, as will in all Probability soon procure his Dismission from those *temporary* Sufferings into *eternal* Happiness: How *odly* soever this Doctrine may appear to his Reason, to be sure it will be *charming* enough to his Lusts; and when once a Mans Lusts are retained the Cause is half carried at the Bar of his Judgment. And so

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in all other Instances it is a *great* Disadvantage to *true Religion*, and as *great* an Advantage to *false*, that Mens Faith and Reason are so much swayed and byass'd by their Lusts. For though there is no *Religion* can be *true* but what is *pure* and *holy*, yet it is the Holiness of *true Religion* that doth provoke their Lusts against it, and 'tis their Lusts that do provoke their Reason; and when all is done there is nothing doth more strongly incline, or frequently pervert *depraved* and *wicked* Minds to *false Religion* than its Compliance with their *vicious* Affections, though this very Thing is one of the most certain Signs in Nature of its Falshood.

3. Living in any *known* Course of Sin deprives Men of the *greatest* Encouragements to Constancy and Steadfastness in the *true Religion*: For doubtless the *highest* Encouragement to Perseverance in the Truth against all Oppositions and Temptations, is the Hope of those *glorious* Rewards that await them in the World to come. 'Twas this that guarded the Faith of the *antient* Martyrs safe through all the Rage and Cruelty of their Persecutors, their having an Eye to the Recompence of Reward, the Sight of which inspired the *drooping* Souls with an *invincible* Courage; made them despise *Racks*, and *Wheels*, and *Flames*, and exalt and triumph under the most *exquisite* Torments. And indeed what *less* Encouragement than the Hope of being eternally *happy* within a *few* Moments could have enabled a Company of *tender* Virgins, *delicate* Matrons, *infirm* and *aged* Bishops to endure those *long* and *dolorous* Martyrdoms, as many times they did, when their Tormentors took their turns from Morn to Night, and plyed them with all Kinds of Tortures  
till

till oftentimes they were forced to give over ; and confess themselves overcome either through Weariness or Compassion ? But now by indulging ourselves in any *known* Course of Sin we throw away this *Sovereign* Cordial, and leave our selves *naked* and *destitute* of all the *mighty* Supports it is able to give us under any Temptation to Apostacy. For how can we hope for any Good from God, and much less for so great a Good as a *Heaven* of *immortal* Joys amounts to, whilst we persist in *open* Rebellion against him ; especially when he hath expressly suspended this *mighty* Recompence upon our *constant* and *faithful* Obedience to his Will, and told us plainly before hand, that we might know what to trust to, that if we fail of *this* he will be so far from admitting us into that Place and State of Blessedness, that he will banish us *for ever* from his Presence into *outer* Darkness, and *eternal* Wretchedness and Despair ? When by *wilful* Sin therefore we have cast away our hope of Heaven, what have we left to support our Constancy to the Truth if ever we should be called to suffer for it ? How can it be expected that rather than renounce our *Religion*, we should be contented to part with our *Goods*, or *Liberties*, or *Lives*, when all our Hope is shut up in this Life, and we have no Prospect of Compensation either *here* or *hereafter* ? If ever therefore we would be *stedfast* to the Truth against all Temptations, we must above all Things take Care by a *holy* Life to cherish and keep alive the Hopes of *Heaven* in our Breasts, which is the only Anchor that can hold and secure us in a *stormy* Sea from making Shipwrack of our Faith.

4. Living in any *known* Course of Sin weakens the

the *natural* Force of Mens Consciences, which is the *greatest* Restraint from Apostacy. Indeed for Men to *apostatize* from their *Religion* to secure their *worldly* Interest is a Thing so *base* and *infamous*, so *foul* an Instance of a *cowardly*, *degenerous*, and *prostitute* Soul, that if a Man were under no *other* Restraint but only that Sense of Honour that is lodged in all *brave* Minds, he would scorn so *mean*, so *poor* a Condescension. But yet when all is done, there is no such *powerful* Restraint upon Men as that of a *good* Conscience, which is the *natural* Bridle by which *God* curbs our *head-strong* Nature, and keeps it from flying out into all the *wild* Extravagancies it is inclined to. For it is from *God* and in *God's* stead that Conscience acts, who is the most *powerful* Being in the World: When it *commands*, it is with *God's* Authority; when it *rebukes*, it is with *God's* Majesty; when it *applauds*, it is with *God's* Complacency: It proceeds not upon Principles of *mere* Policy or Prudence, which require us to act this way *now*, and *anon* the contrary, as Circumstances alter; but upon the *awful* Principles of Divinity, which oblige us by all that we can hope or fear *for ever*, and require of us the self same Things and Actions in all Circumstances; and the *sole* Reason it insists on is the Will of *God*, whose Pleasure or Displeasure can make us *happy* or *miserable* for ever. The Voice of Conscience is not, *This I judge most expedient for thee to do, and this to avoid, but this thou must do, and this avoid as thou tenderest the Love of God and darest his everlasting Hatred and Revenge*: And it is no less than *eternal* Bliss that Conscience allures our Hope with, and *eternal* Vengeance that it alarms our Fear with; and if Men will not be withheld



held by such *powerful* Restraints as these, what can withhold them ? Whilst therefore a Man cherishes his Conscience by complying with it and follows its Directions, this, if any Thing, will secure his *steadfastness* to the Truth against all Temptations ; whilst this hath any Power over him, he will as soon eat Fire as *sacrifice* his Faith to his Interest. For, for a Man to renounce his *Religion* upon any Prospect of *temporal* Gain or Loss, is such a *flagitious* Violation of all that is *Sacred*, such a *monstrous* Instance of *High-Treason* against God, such an *open* Blasphemy of his Truth, such a *bold* Defiance of his Majesty, and in a word, such a Complication of *vile* Perfidy, *base* Ingratitude, and *impious* Falsehood, that but to think of it is like looking down from a *stupendous* Precipice, that swims the Head, and strikes the Mind with Horror and Amazement ; so that while a Man's Conscience hath any Power over him, he will no more be able to prevail with himself to commit the *one*, than to throw himself headlong down from the *other*, whilst he is under the Horror of the Prospect ; and he will find it so much more *easy* to endure the worst of Persecutions, than to commit such an Outrage and Violence on his Conscience, and undergo those *horrible* Reflections and *stinging* Remorses that must follow it : But after a Man by wilful *Sinning*, hath often wounded his Conscience, the *natural* Tenderness of it will by Degrees wear off, till at length it grows quite *callous* and *insensible*. For what is reported of *Methridates*, that by often drinking of Poison, he had so *familiarized* it to his Constitution, that at length it sate quietly on his Stomach, and gave him no Disturbance, is true of Conscience, which

which at first recoils at every *sinful* Potion, and cannot swallow it without suffering *violent* Spasms and Convulsions; but having been awhile accustomed to it, it by Degrees grows more and more *natural*, till at length it goes more glibly *down* without straining, and goes quietly *off* without Remorse or Reluctance. And when once a Man's Conscience is frozen over by a Custom of Sinning, it will every day grow *harder* and *harder*, and at length be able to bear the *heaviest* Loads of Guilt without Relenting; and when once Things are reduced to this State, *Good* and *Evil*, *Virtue* and *Vice* are Things *indifferent* to him which he chuses or refuses as they come to hand, and are *more* or *less* *subservient* to his *present* Convenience. He can *blaspheme*, and *pray*, *oppress* and *give Alms* with the same Unconcernedness of Mind; and to act the *Devil* or the *Saint* are Parts so *indifferent* to him, that he can perform them both with the same Remorslessness. And when a Man is thus got loose from the Restraints of his Conscience there is nothing so *bad* that can come amiss to him. If therefore while he stands in this Posture his *temporal* Interest should chance to beckon him to change the *best Religion* in the World for the *worst*; to pray to *insensible* Images and *dead* Mens Ghosts instead of the *everliving* God; to let go Substances to catch at Shadows and Ceremonies, and to part with the most *rational* Truths for the most *palpable* and *fulsome* Contradictions; he hath no Principle in him *strong* enough to withhold him from a *base* Compliance, his Conscience being laid fast asleep, which whilst awake would have trembled at such an *horrid* Proposal. And though by thus prostituting his Faith

to his Interest, he at once renounces his *God*, his *Saviour*, and all his Hopes of *future Immortality*; yet his *insensible* and *remorseless* Heart is no more toucht or affected with it, than if it were the *slightest* Peccadillo. Thus by letting go a *good Conscience* Men pave themselves an *easy* way to Apostacy from *true Religion*, which otherwise would be one of the most *craggy* and *difficult* Passages in all the High-Way to *Hell*.

5. Living in any *known* Course of Sin doth very much strengthen and enforce the Temptations to Apostacy. He who lives under the Conduct and Government of a *good Conscience*, takes Care to regulate his Affections towards the Things of this World, so, as neither to fear the *Evils* of it too much, nor love the *Goods* of it too well; but makes a *just* and *equal* Estimate of both, and by that proportions his Affections towards them; and he who doth this, disarms them of their *tempting* Power, which is chiefly owing to our selves, and the *false* Estimate we make of them. 'Tis *our own* Imagination that gives Life and Efficacy to the Charms and Terrors of the World, and renders them so *successful* and *victorious*: We fancy *that* to be in them which is not, and so are affected not so much with the Things themselves, as with the *false* Representations that we make of them. But he, who by following the Dictates of a *good Conscience*, hath reduced his *wild* Affections within the Lists of Reason and Sobriety, can from thence defie the World, and maintain his Post against all its Temptations. He loves its *Goods* no better than they deserve, and consequently he loves them not so well as to part with his Virtue, his Innocence, and his  
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Soul for them. He dreads its *Evils* no farther than they are truly *dreadful*, and consequently is fully satisfied, that to Sin is much more *dreadful* than to suffer; and he hath found by often Experience, that in the *faithful* discharge of his Duty, there is far more *Peace*, more *Joy*, and *Satisfaction* than in all the *vain* Allurements of this World. He hath found another *Heaven* upon Earth; besides these *temporary* Enjoyments; a *Heaven* within his own Breast composed of *joyous* Hopes, and *blessed* Expectations; and in this *Heaven* hath often found himself a thousand times more *happy* than among all the Festivities of an *earthly* Paradise; and therefore knows very well that he is bid to his Loss when ever he is tempted to exchange the *one* for the *other*. He is thoroughly sensible, having already found it to his Smart, that by Sinning he shall sustain a much *heavier* Loss, and expose himself to far more *exquisite* Agonies of Mind than any this World can threaten him withall; and therefore certainly reckons upon it, that when ever to avoid a Sin he incurs a Suffering, he wisely chooses of *two* Evils the *least*. And while his Soul stands thus affected, it is *shot-proof* against all Temptations, and much more against those Temptations which sollicit him to renounce his *Religion*, and in which he knows by Experience there is far more *Good* than the World can propose to him in Exchange for it. He knows both how *little* the World, and how much *true Religion* is worth; and having made a *just* Estimate of both, to propose to him any *worldly* Hope as a Price for his Faith, is the same Thing as to offer a Miser Dross for his Gold. His Mind is fixed in this Persuasion, that all the *Mischiefs*



chiefs *this* World can do him are *inconsiderable* to one who must live *for ever* in *another* unspeakably *happy* or *miserable* ; and therefore to threaten him into a Apostacy with any *worldly* Fear, is to attempt to blow up a Rock of Marble with a Squib of Wild-fire. But when once a Man hath taken off the Restraints of his Conscience from his *wild* Affections, and let them loose to the World, they will aid and assist its Temptations against him, and animate them with a thousand times more Life and Vigour than is in their *own* Natures. For as for the *Goods* of this World, they can never bewitch us as they do, did we not give a Dress to them ; we paint their Faces, and varnish them over with an *artificial* Beauty, and then fall in Love with *our own* Fucus ; and so much as we value and affect them beyond their *natural* Worth, so much Power we give them to conquer and enslave us. When therefore by leading a *sensual* and *wicked* Life, a Man has wholly devoted himself to the World, he hath put himself into the Worlds Power to be commanded and disposed of as it pleases. And now if any *worldly good* beckons and invites him, his *mad* Affection will presently hurry him after it, though it be through *thick* and *thin*, through the most *flagitious* and *enormous* Courses. If any *worldly Evil* threaten and alarm him, he must immediately fly, though it be from *Virtue* and *Innocence*, from *God* and *Heaven*, and all that is *Sacred* in *Religion*. His Affections have render'd him a *meer* Laquey to the *Goods* and *Evils* that are *without* him, and whither ever they send him, he must go, wherever they lead him, he must follow, let their Vagaries be never so *wild* or *wicked*. If therefore, while his Soul

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is thus enslaved to the World, he should be tempted by him to *Apostatize* from his *Religion*, what hath he to restrain or secure him? For ever since he got loose from his Conscience, he is wholly led by his Affections, and these being chained and fastened to the World, hale him after it which way soever it moves. So long as his *Religion* and his worldly Interest consist, and go hand in hand, he is very well content to own and follow it; but if ever a Storm of Persecution should part them, in all Probability he will follow his Interest, and like the treacherous Orpha, give his *Religion* a parting Kiss and leave it. For his Heart is now so wedded to the World that he esteems nothing so good as its Goods, and nothing so evil as its Evils; and the one being his *Heaven*, and the other his *Hell*, all other Considerations are overcome by them; and to obtain the one, and avoid the other he must stick at nothing, no not at renouncing his *God* and his *Religion*, together with all his *Hopes* of a future Immortality.

6. And lastly, Living in any known Course of Sin provokes *God* to give us up to the Power of Delusion: For so long as Men submit themselves to the Guidance and Direction of a good Conscience, the Spirit of *God* who is a Spirit of Truth abides with them, and not only directs their Wills, but also informs their Understandings, and enables them to discern the Beauty and Reality of those heavenly Truths, which he hath revealed to us in the *Holy Scriptures*. For though, since he hath revealed already the whole Will of *God* to us concerning our eternal Salvation, we have no Reason to expect that he will reveal new Truths to us; yet seeing so far forth, as it is necessary, he hath promised and engaged, that

he will co-operate with us to enable us as well to understand the Will of *God* as to perform it; we have the *greatest* Reason in the World to depend upon it, that so long as we cherish his *heavenly* Inspirations, by yielding to them our *free* and *ready* Compliance, he will be so far an *assisting Genius* to our Understandings, as to suggest to us those Truths which he hath already revealed, and set them before our Eyes in so *fair* a Light, as that we shall not fail more clearly to discern, and more distinctly to apprehend them than otherwise we should or could have done. For when he writes his Truth upon our Minds, it is with such a *Victorious* Sunbeam as will endure neither Cloud nor Shadow before it. Whenever he speaks, he speaks not to our Ears but to our Minds, and represents Things nakedly and immediately to our Understandings. He converses with our Spirits, as *Spirits* do with *Spirits*, without involving his Sense in *articulate* Sounds or *material* Representations; but objects it to us in its own *naked* Light, and *characterizes* it immediately on our Understandings. And as he proposes the *Divine* Light to us, so he also illuminates our Minds to discern and comprehend it: He raises and exalts our *Intellectual* Powers, and as a *vital* Form to the Light of our Reason, invigorates and actuates it, and thereby renders its Apprehension of Things more *quick*, and *piercing*, and *sagacious*. Thus doth the *Holy Spirit* more or less assist us in the *true* Understanding of *Divine* Things, as he finds us more or less compliant with his *heavenly* Pleasure; and though he stands no more obliged to render our Minds *infallible* than our Wills *impeccable*, yet so long as by our *sincere* Obedience to his *holy* Suggestions, we keep our selves under his Conduct and  
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Direction, we may depend upon it, he will either preserve us from all *dangerous* Errors; or if for *just* Reasons he should permit us to fall into any such, they shall not prove *dangerous* to us, but either we shall be convinced of them while we live, or obtain Pity and Pardon for them when we die. But whilst we persist in any *willful* Course of Sin, we do not only violate *our own* Conscience, but also repel those *good* Motions of the *Spirit* of God, whereby he strives to reduce and reclaim us; in doing which we continually grieve him, and if we do not forbear, shall at length provoke him wholly to forsake and abandon us, to give us up to *our own* Hearts Lusts as *desperate* Wretches, with whom he hath hitherto strove and struggled in vain, and of whose *future* Recovery there remains no *farther* Hope or Prospect. And when he hath forsaken us, our Mind will not only be left *naked* and *destitute* of all those Helps and Advantages for the understanding of *Divine* Truths, which it receives from him, but also be exposed to the Cheats and Fallacies of *Evil Spirits*, whose Recreation it is to put Tricks upon our Minds; to banter and play upon our *easie* Faith, to cast Mists before our Eyes, and therein to juggle away all *true Religion* from us, and foist in the Room of it, the most *fulsom* Errors and Mistakes. For so the *Apostle* tells us of *Antichrist* the great Deceiver, that he should come with all the *deceivableness* of *unrighteousness* to them that perish, because they received not the love of truth, that they might be saved. And that for that Cause, viz. their not receiving the truth in the love of it, God should send them *strong delusion* that they should believe a lye; that is, by abandoning them to the Power of cheating and deluding Spirits: That they all might be damned, who be-



lieved not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness, 2 Thess. 2. 10, 11, 12. And God grant that this at last prove not our Fate, that because we have sinned against the *clearest* Light, and gone astray in all Unrighteousness under the *best* and *purest* Religion in the World, we are not at length given up by God to follow the *wild* Delusions of *Antichrist*, and to believe all those *fulsome* Lyes and Impostures which he from Age to Age hath been imposing upon the World. But whether it prove thus or no, this I am sure of, that by persisting in any *vicious* Course against the Light and Conviction of our Consciences, we highly provoke *Almighty* God to withdraw his Grace from us, and give us up to our *own* Hearts Lusts; and when this is done, *our own* Hearts Lusts will soon betray and give up our Faith to *false* and *vicious* Principles of Religion.

And now having shewn at large what *strong* and *prevalent* Tendencies there are in a *wicked* Life to Apostacy from *true* Religion, I shall conclude this Argument with *two* or *three* Inferences.

1. From hence I infer, What a *great* Malignity there is in Mens being *inconstant* to, and *apostatizing* from the *true* Religion in Compliance with their *sinful* Affections; it being, as you see, the *ill* Daughter of a *bad* Mother, (a *debauched* and a *dissolute* Conscience) and consequently partaking of all its *natural* Bane and Malignity, even as all other *bad* Effects do of the *malignant* Nature of their *bad* Causes. But the Truth of this will more fully appear by considering the *particular* Evils which Mens *Inconstancy* to, and *Proneness* to revolt from the *true* Religion implies; of which I shall give you these five Instances:

1. The *great* Impiety of it.

2. The

2. The *desperate* Folly of it.
3. The *foul* Dishonesty of it.
4. The *shameful* Cowardize of it.
5. The *vast* Hazard and Insecurity of it.

1. Consider the *great* Impiety of it. He who can part with his *Religion*, or any Principle of it, upon any *other* Terms than a *full* Conviction of the Falseness of it, is either a *down-right* Atheist; who believing no *Religion* to be *true*, governs himself by this Principle, That the *wisest* Course is to profess none but that which is uppermost, and most for his Interest; or a *prophane* and *impious* Wretch, who, though he believes his *own Religion true*, exchanges it for *another* which he believes to be *false*, upon no *other* Consideration, but so much *temporal* Advantage to boot: By which he plainly declares, that in the Ballance of his Estimation the Odds between *Truth* and *Falseness*, the Declarations of *God*, and the Impostures of the *Devil* is so *inconsiderable*, that the *least* Addition of the *transitory* Goods of this World to the *later*, renders it of *sufficient* Weight to turn the Scale against the *former*, and that for his part he is not much concerned whether the *Almighty* be his Friend or Foe; and provided he may but enjoy his Ease and Pleasure a *few* Years longer here, he is very well contented to part with all his Hopes and Interest in *God* for ever. For this is the *natural* Construction of Mens Apostacy from the *true Religion* in Consideration of their *worldly* Interest, that *that* Interest is in their Esteem far more *eligible* than *God* with all his Power and Goodness, that it is *better* to be without *God* in the World than without Preferment, and that *that* Man makes a very *good* Bargain, who gets a *good* Place in Exchange for his *Maker*, and with the

*treacherous Judas* sells his *Saviour*, though it be but for *thirty pieces of Silver*: Which is such a monstrous Degree of Impiety, as one would think, should be sufficient to scare and affright the most courageous Sinner that hath but the least Apprehension of God, or Sense of Good and Evil. But then,

2. Consider the desperate Folly of Mens abandoning their Religion in Compliance with their vicious Affections. For he who without through Conviction abandons the Profession of his Religion, whether it be true or false, doth together with that most certainly abandon all the blessed Rewards, and incur all the dreadful Penalties that true Religion promises and denounces, because though his Religion perhaps may be false, yet in renouncing it whilst he believes it true, his Will doth as maliciously renounce the true Religion as if it really were so. He thought it true, and yet renounc'd it, by which he plainly declares that if it had been true he would have renounced it; so that whether it be true or false, it's all one to him, his Will is the same, his Crime and Guilt the same; it is true Religion he intentionally renounces, and therefore in so doing he doth intentionally renounce all his Concern and Interest in true Religion. Now what a desperate piece of Folly is this for a Man to part with all his Stock in the Common Bank of Religion which if it be not a downright Sham and Imposture, is of everlasting Moment and Concern to him, only for a present Gratification of some vain and unreasonable Lust; to divorce himself for ever from the Love of God, to quit all Title and Interest in the precious Blood of the Saviour of the World only to curry a short-lived Favour with Men, with Men whose Breath is in their Nostrils, and who within a few Days or Years must go off the Stage, and leave us here perhaps

haps *forlorn* and *destitute*? To part with all my *glorious* Hopes of *Heaven*, which are my *best* *Heaven* upon *Earth*; and which is *worse*, with *Heaven* it self, where I have Treasures of Blis sufficient to maintain me in a most *happy* Port to *eternal* Ages; only to gain or secure a *transitory* Estate or Preferment, which, while I have, it cannot make me *happy*, and from which erelong I shall be torn and divided, and not be a Farthing the *better* for *forever*; to expose ones self as a *publick* Spectacle of Scorn and Contempt to God and Angels, and all the *wise* and *good* Part of the *rational* World for a *short* *extemporary* Blaze of *pompous* Splendor and Greatness which lies at the Mercy of every Counter-blast of Fortune, and in all Probability will e'er long expire in *Smoak* and *Stink*, *Wretchedness* and *Infamy*; to plunge ones self head-long into all the Agonies and Torments, the Horrors and Desperations of a *woeful* *Eternity*, only to escape a *short* Persecution, and a *glorious* Martyrdom; when a little after perhaps I shall suffer a *great* deal *more* and *longer* under the *Gout*, or *Stone*, or *Strangury* without the Comfort of dying in a *brave* Cause, and being assured of an *immortal* Recompence than I could have done under the Hand of the Executioner with it? And yet all these *mad* Pranks that Man plays at once, who abandons his *Religion* in Compliance with his Lusts.

3. Consider the *foul* Dishonesty of it: For, besides that our *Religion* being the most *sacred* Pledg committed to us by God for *our own* Use, and the Use of our *latest* Posterity, we cannot viciously desert and abandon it without betraying of God, and falsifying our Trust to him; and which is *worse*, without squandering away the most *inestimable* Good that ever he committed to Men, upon



our own *base* Lusts, and his most *execrable* Enemies, which is *Dishonesty* blackned with the *fondest* Ingratitude : Besides this, I say, by forsaking our *Religion* in Compliance with any *lewd* Affection, we not only do a *dishonest* Thing at *present*, but also totally discard the Obligations to *Honesty* for the *future* : For there is nothing can rationally oblige a Man to be throughly *honest* but only his *Religion*, or *inward* Sense that it is his *indispensable* Duty towards *God*, before whose *righteous* Tribunal he must one Day give an Account of all his Actions. The *two great* Motives of *humane* Action are *Religion*, and *worldly* Interest : Now as for *Religion*, that consists of *fix'd* and *unalterable* Principles, which will by no Means ply or bend to the Alterations of *outward* Affairs and Circumstances ; but do in all Conditions move and oblige us with *equal* Force and Vigour ; whereas *Worldly* Interest is a *fickle* and *mutable* Thing that varies and alters with every *outward* Turn and Revolution : So that *that* which is my Interest to *Day*, may prove my Damage to *Morrow* ; and if it should, whatever Part I act to *Day*, it will oblige me to act the contrary to *Morrow*. When therefore a Man hath let go his *Religion*, and hath nothing but his Interest to hold him, it is *Cross* or *Pile* for the *future* ; whether you find him an *Honest* Man or a *Knave* ; because from henceforth he will be *Knave* or *Honest* according as it serves his Turn, and that which serves his Turn to *Day* may prove his Loss and Prejudice to *Morrow* ; so that whether to *Day* or to *Morrow* he proves a *true* Man or a Cheat, wholly depends upon the *Die* of Fortune, and you must consult his Stars to find the *lucky* Hour or Moment when you may safely trust him. For after the Wretch hath  
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been so perfidious as to renounce his God and his Religion, he hath no one Principle remaining in him upon which you can fasten any lasting Confidence. As for his Interest, that is such a *fickle and inconstant* Thing that there is no trusting it; if it plead for you now, the next Turn of Affairs it may be retained against you, and the Man being got loose from all the Tyes and Obligations of Fidelity, you may be sure he will stick at nothing be it never so foul, that his present Interest invites him to to serve himself; he will make no Bones, whenever he hath a fair Opportunity, to cheat and betray his own Father; or supplant his dearest Friend or Benefactor; and what should hinder him? his Conscience and Religion being gone, and with them all binding Principles of Truth and Honesty. For when a Man forsakes his Religion out of any vicious Affection, he doth in Effect make this publick Declaration to the World, By this my own Act and Deed I do here for ever renounce all the Obligations to Honesty and fair Dealing with God or Men, and am resolved for the future to be deaf and inexorable to all the Importunities of Conscience and Religion. From henceforth I will listen to no other Call but that of my worldly Interest; when that bids me be honest, I will be honest, and when it bids me play the Knave, I will play the Knave; and therefore for the future I warn all that know me to trust me no farther than they can make it my Interest to be true, and not to venture the most trifling Matter in which they are unwilling to be wronged, either upon my Faith, or Word, or Oath, without demanding of me such ample Securities as may render it impossible for me to wrong them without wronging my self. For this is the Principle I now intend to live by, That is always best and fittest to be done,  
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*that is most subservient to my present Interest.* This in Construction of Fact is the Profession which that Man takes up, who in Compliance with any *vicious Affection* abandons the Profession of his *Religion*.

4. Consider the *shameful* Cowardize of it. The Advantages of *true Religion* are great enough to encourage a Mind of any Constancy or Firmness to charge through the *greatest* Difficulties the World can interpose between *them* and *him*. Who that hath the Spirit of a Man would ever boggle to wade through a *narrow shallow* Stream of *temporary* Sufferings, whilst on the *farther* Shore he beholds a *Heaven* of *Immortal* Joys ready to receive and reward him? But for a Man to turn his Back, and run away from *God* and *Heaven* for Fear only of being disappointed by some *lewd*, or *covetous*, or *ambitious* Hope, is such an Instance of *vile*, *prostitute* Baseness as is beneath even Contempt and Derision. For what Danger or Difficulty dares that Wretch encounter, that dares not stand by his *Religion*, in which he confesses all his *future* Hopes are involved, for fear of losing *such* a Place, or being disappointed of *such* a Preferment, which within a few Days or Years he knows very well he must lose *for ever*? He who hath a Mind capable of being scared out of his *Religion* by such *mean* Considerations as these, is good for nothing but only to be made the Foot-Ball of Fortune; to be kick'd up and down upon her *scornful* Toe at Pleasure, who by threatening him with the *smallest* Evil, can huff him out of the *greatest* Good, and finding him a *wretched* *passive* Thing that hath not Strength enough to resist her *weakest* Impressions, makes him her Sport and Recreation, and turns him into any Thing, and tosses him whither she pleases; from *Truth* to  
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*Faithood*, from *God* to the *Devil*, and from *Heaven* to *Hell* without the *least* Controul or Opposition. For the *poor* Man's Soul is grown so *tender* and *effeminate*, that for the *greatest* Good in all the World he cannot endure the *least* Air of Suffering to blow upon him : Tell him of Suffering for *Righteousness* Sake, and the very Thought of it frights and appales him. Present but a Persecution at his Breast, and bid him stand and deliver, and the *crest-fallen* Pultroon is presently ready to cry out, *O spare my Life, spare my Skin ! and take my Religion, take my God, and all my Hopes of Heaven and Immortality.* And who but an *infamous* Coward would ever endure to be hector'd out of so *vast* a Good by the *weak* and *impotent* Evils of this World ; which if they do their *worst* can only rob him of a *few* *transitory* Enjoyments, which without their Constraint he must ere long take his leave of *for ever* ? How *ridiculously mean-spirited* would it be for a Man to deliver up his Purse to a Thief, who he knows hath no *other* Weapon but a *slender* Switch to hurt and offend him ? But for a Man to deliver up his *Religion*, and with that his *God* and his *Heaven*, at the demand of a *short* *Skin-deep* Affliction, which can only disease him for a *few* Moments, and shall then determine in *everlasting* Pleasure and Delight, is a thousand times more *mean* and *ridiculous*.

5. And Lastly, Consider the *vast* Hazard and Insecurity of a Man's parting with his *Religion* in Compliance with his *vicious* Affections : For that which moves him to it is only his Prospect of living at Ease a *few* Years longer, or gratifying some *covetous* Desire or Ambition ; but whether he obtain these Ends by parting with his *Religion*, is *vastly* *hazardous* and *insecure*. Perhaps when I have act-  
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ed this *impious* and *perfidious* Part, I may be cast into such Circumstances, as may force me upon *impartial* Reflections, and make me see, whether I will or no, the Blackness and Infamy of my Revolt and Apostacy; which if it should happen would inevitably raise such a Swarm of Horrors in my Conscience, and cast me into such Agonies and Convulsions of Soul, as will render me a *Hell* and a *Devil* to my self, and give me a thousand times more Pain and Uneasiness than all those *temporal* Evils could have done, for fear of which I ran away from my *Religion*. And if to shun *Poverty*, I should throw my self into *Desperation*; if to avoid a *Prison*, which to an *innocent* Mind with a *righteous* Cause can make a *Heaven* upon Earth, I should cast my self into a *Hell* upon Earth; if to keep in a *whole* Skin, I should bring upon my self the *intolerable* Anguish of a *wounded* Spirit; if to escape being *rejected*, *disgraced*, and *discountenanced* by Men, I should expose my self to the *perpetual* Clamour and Reproaches of my *own* Conscience: If these Things, I say, should happen, as its very *probable* they may, I shall find my self miserably disappointed of that Ease and *quiet* Enjoyment for the sake of which I basely abandoned my *Religion*; I shall find that to save my Garments from being singed, I have thrown my Body into a *consuming* Flame, and only exposed my Breast to save my Buckler. But then suppose this should not happen; suppose my Conscience should be *stupid* and *insensible* enough to bear the Guilt of my Apostacy without Remorse or Relenting; yet my Prospect of Gain and Advancement in this World is extremely *hazardous* and *insecure*. For it is a thousand to one, but they to whose *Religion* I turn, and upon whose favour I depend

depend, will by *one* Means or *other* discover my Falshood and Insincerity ; and if in the Course of my Actions, or any other *suspicious* Indication, they should find Cause to be *jealous* that I embrac'd their Religion only to serve my Interest, and against the Persuasion of *my own* Mind ; if they are *wise* they will treat me as a *dangerous* Person, upon whom there is no Reliance ; For how can they imagine that I should be *true* to them who have been *false* to my Religion ? It is a Proverb among the *Jews*, That *Profelytes are not to be trusted to the Tenth Generation* ; and by too many *woful* Instances in *our own* Neighbourhood, we find it a Maxim in some Men Politicks, That a *New Convert* is no more to be trusted than an *Old Heretick*. And though for a while they may think fit to use me as a *proper* Tool to serve a *present* Design, yet to be sure they will use me no longer than they needs must ; and when I have done their Work, I must expect to be thrust out to make room for such as they can more safely depend on. And if this should not happen, as it is very probable it may ; yet seeing all *humane* Affairs are liable to *perpetual* Turns and Mutabilities, perhaps upon the *next* Revolution a *contrary* Interest may appear upon the Stage, and then I shall find my self deserted of all my *present* Supports and Dependencies, and like a *forlorn* Wretch utterly abandoned both by God and Men, without any *other* Company to entertain me in this my *mourful* Solitude, besides the *woful* Remembrances of my Guilt and Shame. To such *infinite* Uncertainties of obtaining their Ends are those *miserable* Men exposed, who desert their Religion in pursuit of their *worldly* Interest. And so I have done with the first Inference : But then,

2. From hence I infer, How *cautions* a Man ought

ought to be in changing his *Religion*; or any Principles of it, least that which induces him to it be not so much his Conviction as his *profligate* Conscience. I do not pretend, that Men are always to maintain the same Persuasion in Matters of *Religion*; for such an Obligation would as effectually serve the Interest of *false Religion*, as of *true*. Whatever some Men pretend, we are all of us from *Top to Bottom*, a Company of *fallible* Creatures; and if we are in an Error, as it is possible we may, it is our Duty to endeavour to be *better* informed. Nor do I deny, but an *honest-minded* Man, without being in the least influenced by a *bad Conscience*, may be innocently, or at least pitiably seduced from *Truth* to *Error* by *false Colours* and *probable* Appearances, for want of *sufficient* Sagacity to distinguish between *Sophistry* and *true Reason*. But if in Compliance with any *vicious* Affection, or in Pursuit of any *worldly* Interest, a Man deserts the Truth, and takes up *false* and *erroneous* Principles, his Error is no longer imputable to the *Weakness* of his Understanding, but to the *Wickedness* of his Will; and a *willful* Error in his Faith will prove as *fatal* and as *damnable* to him, as a *willful* Wickedness in his Manners; and when ever his *wretched* Soul shall appear before the *great Searcher of Hearts*, it shall certainly be treated by him as a *willful* Apostate that hath perfidiously renounced his *Baptismal Vow*, and abjured his *God*, his *Saviour*, *Truth*, and *Religion*. And seeing it is thus, it very highly concerns Men, as they love themselves, or have any Regard of their own *everlasting* Well-being, not to desert their *Religion* or any Principle of it, upon any other Motive than a *thorough* Conviction of its Falshood; not to suffer themselves to be seduced  
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from it by any *temporal* Interest or *vicious* Affection, lest in so doing they *reprobate* themselves from God, and all the *blessed* Hopes of a *glorious* Eternity hereafter. For when Men are upon changing their Persuasions in Religion, it is an *ordinary* Thing for their Interests and Passions so to intermingle with their Reasonings, that without some Care and Observation of themselves they will not be able to discern which of the *two* hath the *greater* Influence upon them; insomuch, that I am very apt to think that there are a great many *careless* and *unreflecting* People that are hurried meerly by their Interest and Passions out of *one* Religious Persuasion into *another*, who yet through *gross* Neglect and Inobservance of themselves, believe themselves to be Converts upon *pure* Reason and Conviction. Perhaps upon the Sollicitations of *worldly* Interest their Minds were wrought into a *strong* Inclination to a Change; insomuch, that they vehemently wish that they could but satisfy their Reason and Conscience of the Truth and Reality of that *new* Persuasion, which these their *importunate* Passions so earnestly invite them to embrace; and then with this *strong* Byass of *worldly* Interest upon their Minds, away they run hunting after Reasons and Arguments to convince and satisfy themselves; and if in this Heat of Affection they can but light upon any *little* shew of Probability, that will quickly improve them into *irrefragable* Proofs and Demonstrations: For when a Man enquires, whether such a Doctrine be *true* with a *strong* Inclination of Will to find it so, he will be afraid to consult the Reasons and Arguments against it, lest they should convince him that it is *false*, and thereby defeat his Inclination. And when once a Man is so prepossessioned



sed as that he will listen only to *one* side of the Question, be that side never so *absurd* and *rediculous*; it is a *hard* Case if he cannot find Reasons enough to wheadle himself into the Belief of it; for his very Inclination to believe it will deter him from entring into a *strict* Examination of those Reasons, and being afraid to examine them *too* far lest he should find them *false* and *unconcluding*, if he can but discern the *least* Colour of Probability in their *first* View and Appearance, that will be sufficient to convince him, and render him a *warm* and *zealous* Convert: For indeed, the Man was a Convert in his Heart upon Reasons of *worldly* Interest, before ever he thought of those Reasons of *Religion* that made him a Convert in his Judgment; so that 'twas his Interest that Converted his Affections, and his Affections that Converted his Faith; and yet all this while, for want of *Self-reflection*, the Man imagins that his *new* Faith is wholly owing to the Reason and Evidence it carries with it; whereas, would he but impartially consult himself, and take a *little* Pains to review the Steps and Progress of his Change, where it began, and how it proceeded and concluded, he would soon be forced to acknowledge, that the *first* and *fundamental* Reason of it was nothing but a *worldly* Interest. Wherefore to secure you against this *dangerous* Piece of *Self-delusion*, by which I doubt there are *too* many Men do eternally Ruine and Destroy themselves, I will endeavour to give you some *certain* Signs and Indications by which you may be able to Judge, if ever you should be tempted to change your *present Religion* or *Persuasion*, whether you do it sincerely and upon *pure* Conviction of Mind, or in *meer* Compliance with any *vicious* or *worldly* Affection:

fection: And I shall give them to you in these following Queries, which I earnestly beseech you seriously to propose to your *own* Souls, whenever any such Temptation shall befall you.

1. Whether upon your *first* Entrance on the Debate of Changing, your Prejudice lie on the side of your *present Religion*, or of that you are invited to turn to?
2. Whether you have not some distaste in your Affections to your *present Religion*, before you entertained any Overtures of changing it?
3. Whether that which gave you *first* Inclination to Change was not some *temporal* Interest?
4. Whether before you entertained any Intention to Change, you were fully resolved to consult impartially both sides of the Question?
5. Whether when you *first* entered upon this Consultation it was your *unfeigned* Intention, whatever shall happen to you, to adhere to that Side which should appear most *reasonable*?
6. And lastly, whether before you were inclined to change; you did conscienciously comply with the Obligations of *Religion*, and continued to do so afterwards?

1. When you fall under any Temptation to Change, ask your *own* Soul whether your Prejudice lye on the side of your *present Religion*, or of that which you are tempted to turn to? There is no Man that sincerely professes any *Religion*, but must be strongly prejudiced for it, especially if he imbibed it betimes, and was principled in it by his Education; for how can he sincerely profess it without engaging his Affections towards it, and heartily espousing its Interest? For though I confess it is a Fault for Men so to preengage themselves

to any *Religious* Principles, especially such as are not exceeding *clear* and *evident* (and such are all the *Fundamentals of Christianity*) as to shut their Ears against all *contrary* Reasons, and obstinately resolve never to part with them, or so much as to admit into Consideration any Argument or Evidence against them; yet after all it is impossible for any *sincere* Professor of any *Religion*, whether it be *true* or *false*, to be so indifferently *affected* towards it as not to side with it in his Will as well as in his Faith and Judgment; so that whenever he is tempted to desert it, the Temptation must necessarily find him strongly preingaged for it; and unless it bring a long with it *sufficient* Evidence not only to convince his Reason, but also to captivate his Prejudice, it will never be able to prevail. For if ever the Man loved his *Religion*, his Passion will contend for it as well as his Reason; so that all Arguments against it, be they never so *strong* and *cogent*, will at *first* especially find a *difficult* Access to and an *ungrateful* Reception in his Mind; and though he is so overborn by the Strength of the Evidence against it that he can no longer forbear *doubting* and *suspecting* it, yet still he is very loth to part with it, and still he wishes it were *true*, though he is not able to evince it so, till after having endured a *long* Siege of *strong* and *pressing* Arguments he is driven at length out of all his Defences, and then his Prejudice yields as well as his Judgment to surrender up his *erroneous* Faith to the *prevailing* Power of his Convictions: This is the *natural* Temper of every *sincere* Professor of any *Religion*. When therefore you are at any Time tempted to change your *Religion*, before you proceed, pause a while, and consider seriously how you stand disposed, and which way your Heart is preingaged,

preingaged ; whether to the *Religion* you have hitherto professed, or to *that* for which you are invited to change it. Consult a while with *your own* Souls to which side of the Question you are most inclined to listen, whether to the Side which asserts your *present* Persuasion, or to *that* which contradicts and opposes it. Observe but which Way your Wishes and your Passions move, whether *for* or *against* it, and which Reasons and Arguments you are most concerned for, *those* that oppose, or *those* that defend it. For assure your selves if the Temptation to Change find you *lukewarm* and *indifferent*, or so much as *easy* and *plyable* to its Proposals ; if it finds you *unaverse* to admit of a *contrary* Persuasion, or *forward* to catch at every Shew of Evidence against that *Religion* which you have hitherto professed, or ready to be *stagger'd* out of it upon the *first* Appearance of any Reasons or Probabilities against it ; if, I say, you find any of these *evil* Symptons upon you when you are *first* tempted to change, you have *great* Reason to suspect that you are a *false Hypocrite* to that Profession which you have hitherto made ; that there is some *vile* Affection in you that hath got the Ascendant of your *Religion* and your Conscience, and that if in this Temper you proceed to a Change, you will be found to be a Convert of your Lusts and not of your Convictions.

2. When you fall under any Temptation to change your *Religion*, examine whether you have not entertained some Distast to it in your Affections, before you proceed any farther ; whether you have not entertained some Quarrel against it upon the account of the Disturbance it gives you in your  *vicious* Delights and Enjoyments ; or because it too severely exacts of you *universal* Sanctity of Life and



Manners, to which of all things in the World your Heart is most averse, and without which the *inflexible* Principles of your *present* Persuasion will not permit you to hope for any Favour from God either *here* or *hereafter*. Consider whether upon these Accounts your Mind be not cankered with a *secret* Enmity against your *Religion*; whether under those Qualms of Conscience it often gives you, your Heart doth not rise against it, and you do not sometimes secretly wish that you could release your Faith from its *tyrannick* Principles which give you so much Pain and Disturbance, and submit it to some *gentler Religion* that would permit you to Sin in quiet, or at *least* prove more indulgent to your Lusts: For if this be your Temper you are in very *great* Danger of being betrayed by it into any *false* and *corrupt Religion* that shall be tender'd you in exchange for your own. For if this *other Religion* offer but any *fair* Terms to your *vicious* Affections, or propose but any Expedient how to accomodate the *vexatious* Quarrel between them and your Consciences; if it doth but any way reconcile your Hope of *Heaven* to your *vicious* Manners, by directing you to some *easier* Terms of Salvation than that of forsaking all Unrighteousness, and *worldly* Lusts, and live *soberly*, and *righteously*, and *godly* in *this present World*; if it will but admit of any Commutation of that *unsufferable* Penance of Godliness for *bodily* Exercise, of *inward* Mortification for a *long* Fast or a *sound* Whipping, of putting off the *old Man* for putting on a *Hair Shirt*, of running the Race of a *holy* Life for a *santring* Pilgrimage, or the like; this is a *Religion* for your Tooth, with which your *naughty* Heart will be ready enough to fall in love upon the *first* Interview: and when once it hath

hath gained our Heart and Affections, if we do not take the *greater* Heed they will quickly gain our Faith and Judgment: For when a Man is *angry* with his own *Religion* because it sits *uneasy* on his Conscience, if a more *easy Religion* presents it self to him, he can hardly forbear wishing it were *true* though as yet he hath no Evidence that it is so; and then a very *slender* Evidence will suffice to induce a Belief of the Reality of any Thing which a Man earnestly wishes and desires. If in this *ill* Temper of Mind therefore you should be tempted to change your *Religion*, it concerns you as much as your Souls are worth to look about you; for you have a Seducer in your Breast, a *prevalent insinuating* Seducer, viz. some *vile* and *sinful* Affection, who, if you listen to his *charming* Persuasions, will certainly betray you into a most *damnable* Apostacy. Wherefore before you proceed to examine the Merits of the Cause, consider seriously with your selves that *that* Disturbance which your *present Religion* gives to your *vicious* Affections, for which you are so *angry* with it, is so far from being a *just* Ground to suspect it, that it is a *real* Evidence of the Truth of it; because it is a *sensible* Demonstration of its Holiness, which is an *inseparable* Concomitant of Truth; and therefore for you to desert it upon this Motive is in Effect to pronounce it a *false Religion*; because it gives you a *sensible* Experiment of its Truth and Reality.

3. When you fall under any Temptation to change your *Religion*, consider whether that which gave you the *first* Inclination to change was not some *temporal* Interest; whether before ever you admitted any Thought of a Change, you did not perceive *another Religion* appear upon the Stage at-

tended with all the *fair* Hopes and Advantages of this World, and whether this Prospect did not *first* suggest to you a *great* Inclination to enter into its Retinue. I do not deny, but that even *worldly* Considerations may so far influence *honest* Minds as to put them upon a more *severe* and *impartial* Scrutiny of their *present* Persuasions in *Religion*; and unless it be in Case of *palpable* Truth or Falshood it is but *honest* Prudence, when a Man's *temporal* Interest lies at stake, to take Care that he is sure of his Hand, that he doth not throw it away upon a *false* Persuasion in a Fit of *blind* Humour or Obstinacy, and sacrifice that to an *erroneous* Judgment which he owes to no *other* Altar but Truth's. And indeed before I throw my self upon any Suffering, whether it be *Loss* or *Pain*, I am bound in Conscience diligently to enquire whether it be for *Truth* or *Righteousness* sake, lest instead of receiving the Crown of Martyrdom I am sent away to seek my Reward in the *Paradise of Fools*. But if meerly upon the Consideration of any *present* Loss or Advantage I find my self strongly inclined to change my *Religion*, before ever I enter into the Merits of the Cause to examine the Reasons *pro* and *con*, it is a *certain* Sign that *that* Loss or Advantage that inclines me, hath a more *powerful* Influence upon me than my *Religion*; that I love the World better than *God*, and do prefer my *earthly* Expectations before all my Hopes of *everlasting* Happiness. And if in this *ill* Temper of Mind I should be tempted to a *present* Change, it concerns me as much as my Soul is worth to be *very careful* what I do; For I stand upon the Brink of a Precipice, the *soul* and *fatal* Precipice of Apostacy, into which if I fall I am ruined *for ever*. For if in changing my *Religion* it be found that I follow-

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ed this my *wicked* Inclination more than any *sincere* Conviction, I must expect to be treated by *God* as an *Apostate* and *Renegado*, as a *wilful* Deserter of his Cause, and Betrayer of his *sacred* Truth. But if I change while I stand thus inclined, it is fearfully *hazardous* but this will be found to be the Truth of the Case ; for in all Probability my *wicked* Inclination will cast a Mist before my Understanding, and so darken its Prospect that it will hardly be able to distinguish the *gross*est Sophistry from the *clear*est Reason. So that now those Arguings which before I saw through with half an Eye, and look'd upon as most *absurd* and *ridiculous*, will appear to my *abused* and *byass'd* Mind, in the Colours of *clear* Evidence and *plain* Demonstration, and I shall be ready to surrender up my Faith to those *trifling* Pretences of Reason and Authority, which before I laughed at and despised : Now, *Thou art Peter, and upon this Rock will I build my Church* will seem a very *pregnant* Proof that all the *Bishops of Rome* from *St. Peter* are ordained the *Supreme Heads* of the Church, and the Fountains of all *Ecclesiastical* Authority, though they are not so much as mentioned in it, no nor from any Thing that appears so much as thought of. Now *This is my Body* looks like a *substantial* Evidence of the Truth of *Transubstantiation*, and of all those *wild* Absurdities it contains ; though those Forms of Speech, *I am the true Vine*, and *I am the Door*, do as substantially prove that *Christ* bears Grapes, and turns upon Hinges. Now every Thing will appear to me in a quite *different* Guize from what it did before, and I shall fancy that I spy Demonstration where before I could only discern Probability ; for a *good* Sum of Money, or a *rich* Preferment is a *strange* Clearer of some



Mens Eyesight. Thus when a Man begins to think of changing his *Religion* under the *powerful* Influence of his *worldly* Interest, that is usually the only *effectual* Reason that leads and persuades him : As for *other* Reasons, they only serve for Form-fake to disguise the *foul* Apostacy into some Resemblance of a *sincere* Conversion ; for till his Interest struck in with them, they signified nothing with him, made not the *least* Impression on his Mind ; but being back'd with that, all on a suddain they are wondrous *cogent* and *persuasive* ; from whence it is evident that they received their Strength and Force from his Interest, without the Air of which they are not able to operate ; and consequently that the Change of his Faith is owing to the *overruling* Interest of his Covetousness and Ambition, and not at all to the Prevalence of Reason and *sincere* Conviction. For 'twas *that* Interest that strongly inclined him to change before ever he knew any Reason for it, and then 'twas *that* Inclination that made his Reasons, and created his Convictions ; and let him talk what he pleases of *Reason*, *Scripture*, and *Authority* ; if he was strongly inclined to change before he was moved to it by Reason and Evidence, it is plain that the *prevailing* Motive of his Conversion was either the Fear of losing some *good warm* Place, or the Hope of gaining some *important* Station or Preferment. And if this be found the Truth of his Case when he comes to appear before the Tribunal of *God*, it had been a thousand times *better* for him that he had never been born ; for then he will be found a *base* Deserter of his *God*, a *treacherous* Judas to his *Saviour*, and a *perfidious* Renegado from his *Religion*, and according to the Quality of his Sin and Guilt receive his Portion of Damnation.

4. Consider whether before you entertained any Intention to change, you were fully resolved impartially to consult both sides of the Question. I doubt there are *too* many among us that *first* resolve to change their *Religion*, and then begin to enquire after Reasons and Arguments against it, and that their Resolution to change is so far from being the Effect of *sincere* Conviction, that their Conviction is the Effect of their Resolution. *First*, Some *vile* Affection, or some *temporal* Interest recommends another *Religion* to them that either gives them leave to be *wicked* without Remorse or Disturbance, or promises them Gain and Advancement; upon which they resolve *right or wrong* to entertain and embrace it; and then to excuse themselves to their own Consciences, or to vindicate their Reputation to the World from the Scandal of being *notion-right* Apostates, they fall a hunting after Reasons and Arguments to convince themselves of the Truth of it, or at least to make the World believe that it was not their Interest but their Conviction that turned them. And when Men thus resolve *first*, and enquire *afterwards*, to be sure their Enquiry will be very *partial*; for being fully resolved to change their *Religion* upon some *vicious* or *secular* Motive, it is become their Interest to pick Holes in it, and to reason or cavil themselves out of the Belief of it. And this makes them shy of bringing the Matter under a *fair* and *impartial* Examination, lest while they are seeking Reasons to overthrow their Faith, they should find Reasons to establish and confirm it. So that they begin their Enquiry with these secret Intentions; *We will listen only to one side of the Cause, and leave the other to shift for it self; and seek for as many Arguments*

guments as we can against our Religion, but none for it. We will read the Books and consult the Teachers of one side only, viz. the opposite side to our present Belief and Persuasion, and if among them we can but find Arguments enough to render the contrary Persuasion any way probable, we will submit our Faith to it without any farther Enquiry, and not trouble our selves to examine the Evidence on the other side, for Fear we should be convinc'd in spite of our Teeth that the Truth lies there; and then our Conscience will never let us be quiet, but be perpetually clamouring against us for base and impious Apostates. That this is the foul and hypocritical Intention of too many among us is notorious enough by their Practice; they leap from Church to Church, and from one Communion to another, without any Pause or Consideration; they are with us to Day, and gone from us to Morrow, and are such Mushrooms, extemporary Converts, that before ever we hear they doubted of their own, they are confirmed in a contrary Religion. In short, they steal out of their Religion so softly, and with so little Noise, that they are commonly gone before ever we hear they are going, as if they were afraid we should stop and detain them by better Reasons and fuller Convictions. Whereas had these Men any Conscience or Honesty in them, they would consider, that Religion is a Thing too sacred and serious to be thus dallied and trifled with, and that to change ones Religion is a matter of such vast Importance as requires a long and through Consideration, and a very clear and full Conviction of Mind; that there is too much depends upon it to part with it upon slight Pretences, and that it concerns them as much as an Eternity of Bliss amounts to, not to desert it upon any other Inducement but that

that of a *through well-weighed* Persuasion of Conscience. And if they had *had* any such *honest* Thoughts about them while they were under the Temptation to change, they would never have admitted any Doubt of their *Religion*, but upon *great* and *palpable* Evidence; and then they would have doubted long before they would have concluded against it, and not have precipitated their Judgment *hand over head* into a *contrary* Persuasion, till they had *first* applied themselves for Resolution again and again to their *old* Guides, and Pastors, and with all *due* Deference to their Authority, had strictly examined all their Reasons and Answers, till they had thoroughly inspected their Arguments *pro* and *con*, and equally heard both sides of the Cause; till they had read, advised, and consulted on both sides, and weighed the whole Matter *over* and *over* with the *greatest* Care and Exactness. But when Men run away from their *Religion* in an Instant, without ever observing this *regular* Process of *sincere* Enquiries, it is a *plain* Case that their Wills were resolved before their Understandings, and that they were converted before ever they were convinced; and consequently that it was not Reason and Conviction that turned them, but Lust or Interest: For though when they are turned they may perhaps be very *diligent* to seek Conviction, yet this is only an After-game which they are fain to play to save their Conscience or their Reputation.

5. Consider before you entertain any Intention to change, Whether it be your *unfained* Intention, whatever shall happen to you, to adhere to that side which shall appear most *reasonable*. Perhaps you are not yet arrived to that Height of Impiety as to resolve *right* or *wrong* to change your *Religion*;  
on;



on, whether you find it *true* or *false* upon a *just* and *fair* Examination; for this is such an *horrible* defiance of *God*, such an *express* and *absolute* Renunciation of all that is *sacred* and *good* as no Man can be guilty of who is not utterly abandoned of all his *natural* Sense of *Religion*, and Relish of *Good* and *Evil*. But yet perhaps you may be tempted to change with the Prospect of such Advantages on the *one* side, and Calamities on the *other*, which though it doth not obtain of you that *base* and *wicked* Resolution, yet doth so far prevail as to engage you upon a *fresh* Enquiry to try whether upon *second* Thoughts and *better* Consideration, you can satisfy your own Minds of the Truth of that *Religion* you are invited to turn to, that so you may, if possible, comply with a *good* Conscience, and secure your Interest in doing your Duty. And thus far you are safe enough; but before you proceed any farther, it concerns you, as you tender your *everlasting* Interest, to look into your *own* Souls, and consider seriously whether you are unfeignedly resolved, whatsoever the Consequence of Things may be, to cleave fast to the Truth of *God* on which side soever you shall find it. Put the Question to your selves over and over, *O my Soul*, here are such Advantages, and such Calamities before you, importuning you to change your present discountenanced Religion for a more thriving and prosperous One: Are you now resolved fairly and impartially to examine the Merit of the Cause? And if thereupon you still find Reason to believe that your present Religion is the very Truth of *Jesus*, will you rather renounce those Advantages and incur those Calamities than forgo it? Will you follow the Truth wheresoever you find it, and whithersoever it shall happen to lead you, though

though it be from Preferment to Persecution? Are you resolved by the Grace of God to prostrate all your *temporal* Hopes and Fears before it, and rather to lose any *Good*, or suffer any *Evil* than desert it? For let me tell you, if you find your heart shrink at this Proposal, or that you have any *reserved* Intention, if the worst come to the worst, rather to part with your *Religion* right or wrong, than to shake hands with your *temporal* Interest, you are in a very *unfitting* Temper to examine on which side the Truth lies. For it is a *plain* Case, your Mind is under a *prevailing* Byass of *temporal* Hopes and Fears, which will be sure to incline it to favour that side of the Question which is most for your Interest, and 'twill be impossible for you to examine fairly and judge impartially whilst your Judgment is thus bribed and corrupted by your Interest. For your Will hath already determined upon the Matter before ever your Understanding hath heard the Cause, and it is your *secret* Intention, right or wrong to forgo your *Religion* rather than your Interest, if ever they come in Competition. So that now you will be obliged in your *own* Defence to use your *utmost* Art to set the *fairest* Colours upon the Evidences against your *Religion*, and to stifle and enervate those that assert and maintain it, lest they should so confirm you in the Belief of it as that when Occasion requires, you will not be able to surrender it up without committing an *horrible* Outrage and Violence upon your selves. Wherefore before you suffer your *worldly* Hopes and Fears to summon your *Religion* upon a new Tryal, be sure you fix this Resolution in your Souls; *By the Grace of God I will now lay aside all Interest and Affection, and strictly examine the Evidence on both Sides with an equal and unbiased Judgment.*

*Judgment. I will attend to nothing but the Reasons of Things and the pure Merits of the Cause ; and wherever I find the Truth lies, whether on the Side of my Interest or against it, I will be sure to follow it whatsoever shall be the Event and Issue.* For if upon the Temptation of any worldly Interest you bring your Religion to a new Tryal, with this secret Intention, that though it should still approve it self to your Judgment, yet you will rather part with it than abandon that Interest, this very Intention will be apt to blind and mislead your Judgment, to arm your Wit and Reason against your Religion, and to set all your Faculties at work to argue you out of it, and pervert you from it to a contrary Faith and Persuasion ; which if it should accomplish, you will certainly be found guilty of a willful Apostacy when you come to be tryed before the Tribunal of God, to whose all-seeing Eye the most secret Motions of your Souls are as visible as if they were written on your Foreheads with a Sun-beam ; who sees your treacherous Heart, and false Intention rather to forsake his Truth than your Interest, and knows very well that it is this that seduces you, and gives Force to those false Reasons and Convictions that impose upon your Judgment, and betray your Faith.

6. And lastly, When you fall under any Temptation to change your Religion, consider whether before you were inclined to change you did conscientiously comply with the Obligations of it. We have too many Men that pretend to be mighty inquisitive after the true Church and the true Religion, and yet live as if there were no such Thing as true Religion in the World, and quietly allow themselves in such impious Courses as do openly affront the common Principles of all Religions. There is nothing they dread

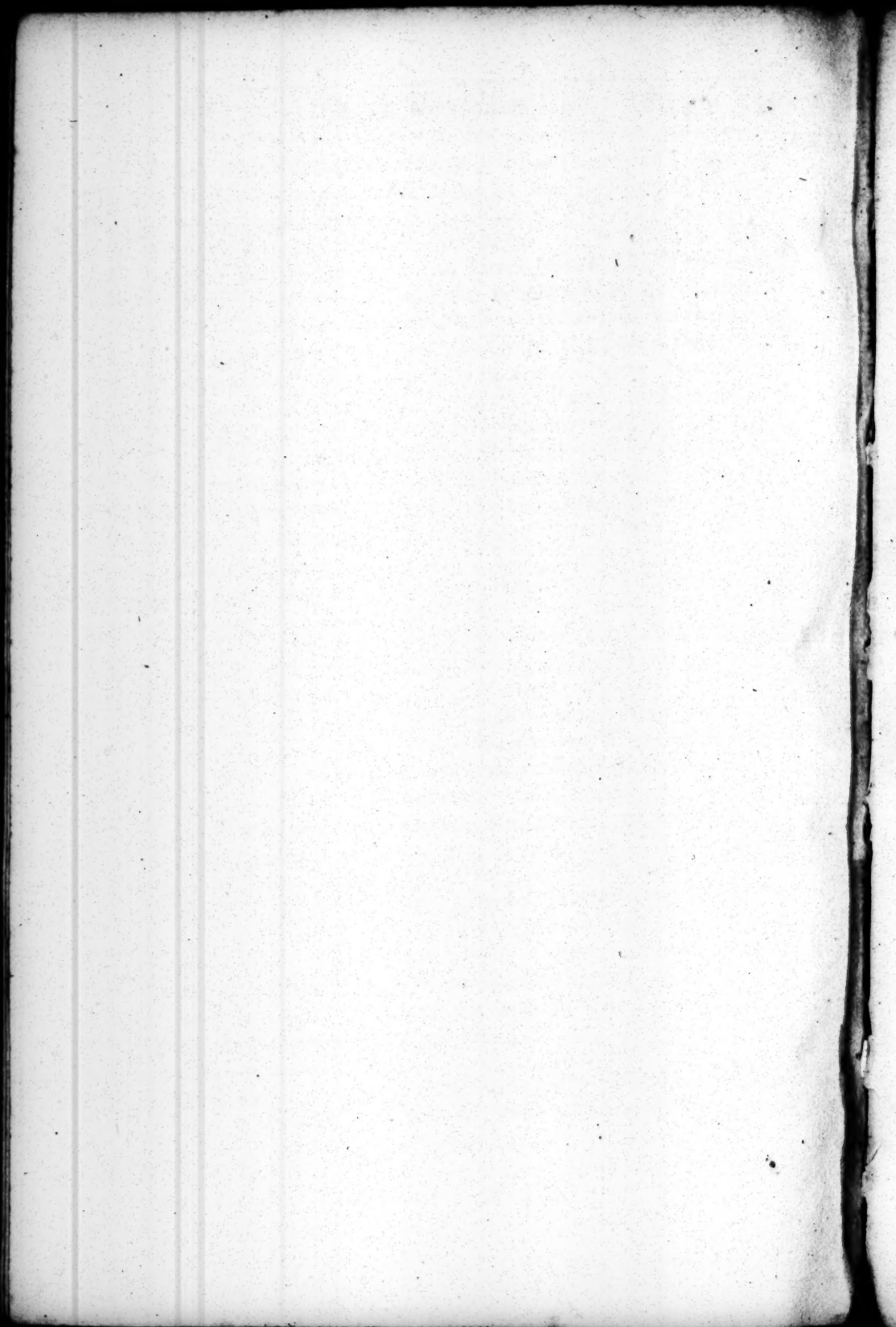
dread so much as *Heresy*, and, if you will believe them, are monstrously concerned to examine whether the *Church* with which they now communicate be *Catholick* or *Heretical*; and yet all this while they persist without any Concern or Remorse in the most *damnable Heresy* in the World, and that is a *wicked and immoral* Life. So that upon comparing their *Atheistical* Lives with the *loud Cry* they make about the *true Catholick Faith* and *Church*, one would be tempted to think that their *Christianity* began at the *wrong End* of their *Creed*, and that they believed in the *Holy Catholick Church* before they believe in *God the Father Almighty*, or in *Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord*; Which is such a *gross and fulsom* Piece of Hypocrisy as one would think any *modest* Man should be ashamed of. For in the name of *God*; Sirs, What have you to do to wrangle and make a Noise about *Religion*, whose *profligate* Manners are a Shame and Scandal to *common* Humanity? It is a Reproach to any *Religion* for you to name it, and Shame to any *Church* for you to pretend to it; and therefore when such as you raise a Cry after the *true Church* and *true Religion*, it is a *plain Case* that whatever Pretence you bring upon the Stage you are prompted by some *base* Interest behind the Curtain. And is it not a *pleasant* Thing to hear such *Profligates* as these pretend to be *Converts*, who only turn from *one* Opinion to *another*, but still continue as *wicked and unreformed* in their Manners under the Opinion they turn to, as they were under *that* they turned from? These are such *Converts* as there is no *Church* in the World that advances *true* Piety above *worldly* Interest, but would glory to lose, and blush to gain: And what *Diogenes* said of a *wicked* Fellow that praised him, that the *Religion* may  
say

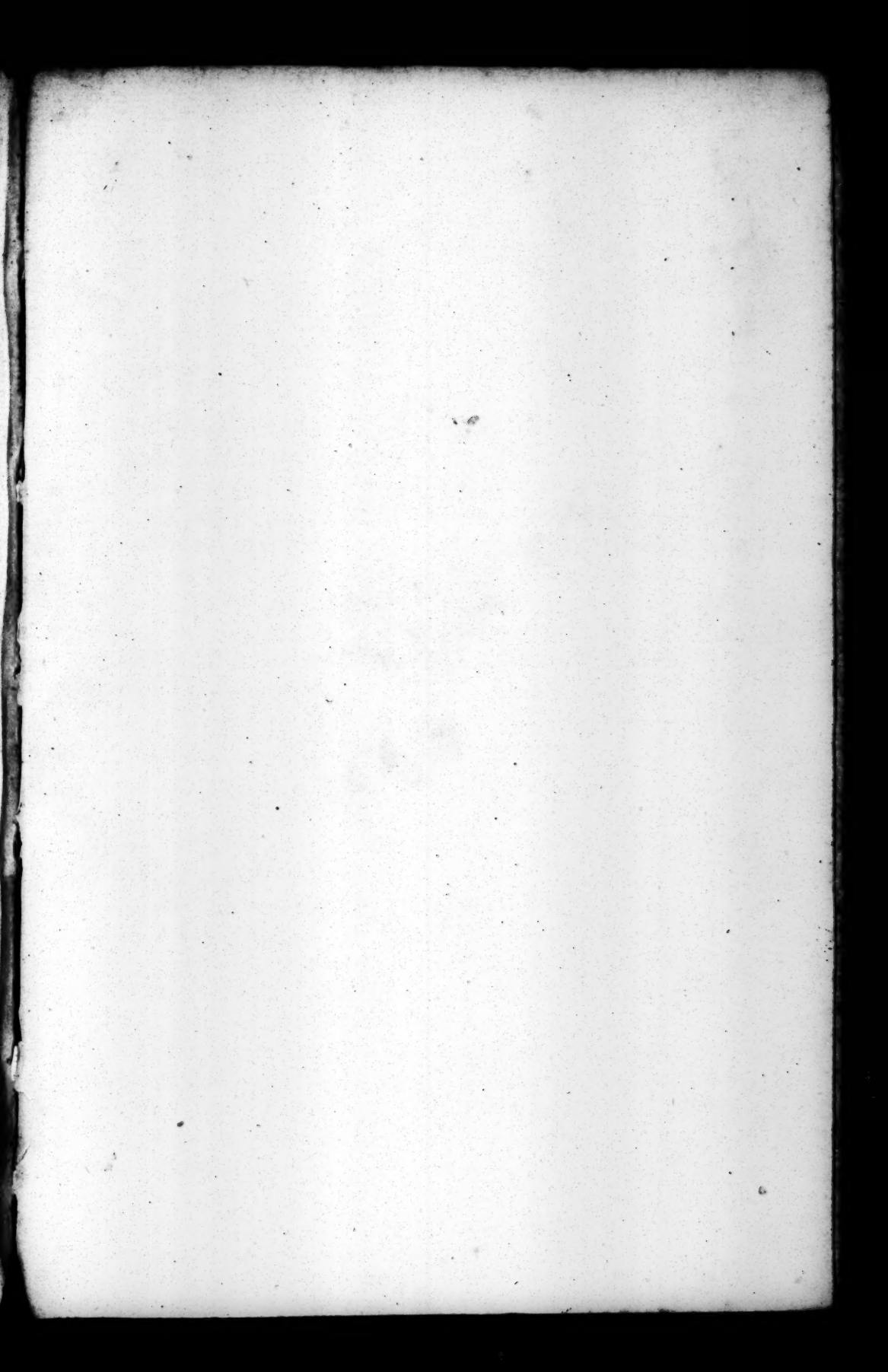


say which those Men turn to, *What Hurt have I done, what wicked Principles am I guilty of, that such vile Wretches as these should commend and embrace me?* For for God's sake, what is it that they are converted to? Is it to any Thing that renders them *wiser or better Men?* No, The contrary is *too notorious* through the whole Course of their Actions. Well then, it seems they are converted to something that doth them no manner of Good, that serves them to no true End of Religion, that is to a *meer empty* Notion that only gingles about their Understandings, but hath no good Influence on their Hearts and Manners. Had their Conversion proceeded upon *pure* Principles of Conscience, that would have obliged them to change their Manners as well as their Opinions; there being very few Opinions in Religion so *contradictory* to the natural Sentiments of Conscience as a *vicious and immoral* Life. Supposing that the *Papal Supremacy, Purgatory, and Transubstantiation* were true, yet that the *contrary* Doctrins to these are Errors can never be so evident to any Man's Conscience, as that *Drunkennes, Adultery, Fraud and Oppression* are Sins; and therefore for any Man to pretend that he forsook *those* Errors out of Conscience, who yet makes no Conscience of continuing in *these* Sins is such a *transparent* Hypocrisy as hath not *Vizor* and Disguize enough to abuse either the most *Candid* or *Credulous*. If therefore before you are resolved to forsake your Sins you are tempted to forsake your Religion, it is a plain Case that it is not your Conscience or Conviction that tempts you, but your Lust or Interest. Had it been Conscience, it would have been far more *importunate* with you to reform your Manners than your Faith, and to become good Men, than *Catholick Believers*; and therefore under your *present* Circumstances you ought to be very *careful* what you do, and how you comply with the Temptation, lest to all the Rest of your Sins you add that *foul and fatal* one of Apostacy, and thereby fill up the Measure of your Iniquities, and finally provoke *Almighty God* to abandon you as you have abandoned him, and give you up for *lost and desperate*.

F I N I S.











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